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AFRICAN BIRD CLUB

Bulletin of the African Bird Club

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African Bird Club

The African Bird Club aims to:

- provide a worldwide focus for African ornithology
- encourage an interest in the conservation of the birds of the region
- liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies
- publish a twice-yearly colour bulletin
- encourage observers to visit lesser known areas of the region
- encourage observers to actively search for globally threatened and near-threatened species
- run the ABC Conservation Programme

Registered Charity No 1053920

ABC Membership

Membership is open to all. Annual subscription rates are:

Individual	Europe & Africa: UK£21	Rest of the World: UK£23
Family	Europe & Africa: UK£24	Rest of the World: UK£26
Student	Europe & Africa: UK£12	Rest of the World: UK£14
Supporting	UK£35 minimum	
Life	UK£500	

To join or for further details please visit the ABC website (where there are secure online payment facilities) or write to the Membership Secretary—see contact information below.

ABC Website

http://www.africanbirdclub.org

Photographers and artists

ABC is always looking for drawings and photos to publish in the Bulletin. If you are interested in contributing, please contact the Graphics Editor, Lionel Sineux, lionel.sineux@gmail.com

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The Bulletin of the African Bird Club

The Bulletin of the ABC provides a forum for news, letters, notices, recent publications, expedition results, reviews and publication of studies on African birds by contributors from throughout the world. Publication of results in the Bulletin of the ABC does not preclude publication of final results as journal papers either by the ABC or elsewhere. No material should, however, be submitted simultaneously to the Bulletin of the ABC and to any other publication.

Brief notes for contributors appear elsewhere in this Bulletin and further details are available from the Editor (editor@africanbirdclub.org).

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Contents

Bull ABC Vol 21 No 1

News & Comment

2 **Club News**
Compiled by Keith Betton

9 **Corrigenda**

10 **Conservation Fund News**

15 **Advertising information**

16 **Africa Round-up**
Compiled by Ron Demey, Guy M. Kirwan and Peter Lack

93 **Recent Reports**
Compiled by Ron Demey

112 **Reviews**

115 **Obituaries**

120 **Notes for Contributors**

Photographs

Mark Anderson, Jan Arras, Rubén Barone, Nigel Birch, Bruno Boedts, Nik Borrow, Ralph Buij, Ken Burton, Caroline Caddick, John Caddick, António Castelo, David Erterius, Ramón Fernández, Brian Finch, Kai Gedeon, Lee Gregory, Louise Jasper, Richard Jeanne, Tom Jenner, Aidan Kelly, Adam Scott Kennedy, Grzegorz Kopij, Marc Languy, John Ledger, M. J. McGrady, Charles Ayuk Nsor, Martin Odino, Georges Olioso, Steffen Oppel, Geoff Orton, Madalena Patacho, William Price, Julien Ramanampamonjy, Adam Riley, Gérard Rocamora, Lionel Sineux, Werner Suter, Keith Valentine, Nigel Voaden, Roger Wilkinson, Jaber Yahia.

Front cover

Rüppell's Vulture / Vautour de Rüppell *Gyps rueppelli* (Adam Riley)

Back cover

Three-banded Plover / Pluvier à triple collier *Charadrius tricollaris* (Mark Anderson)

Features

4 **The African Bird Club—20 years of working for birds in Africa** *Bill Quantrill*

26 **Raptors in northern Cameroon, December 2005–December 2010** *Ralph Buij and Barbara M. Croes*

64 **Migration of raptors across the Bab el Mandeb Strait, Djibouti, March 2013** *M. J. McGrady, H. A. Rayaleh, A. M. Dara and E. Abdillahi*

72 **Observations ornithologiques aux environs d'Antananarivo, Madagascar** *Bruno Boedts*

82 **Unusual concentration of Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* nests on pylons in northern Namibia** *Grzegorz Kopij*

83 **First documented record of Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* for Libya** *Abdulmaula Hamza and Jaber Yahia*

85 **First record of Bamenda Apalis *Apalis bamendae* for Nigeria** *Charles Ayuk Nsor, Elijah Nicodemus and Usman Bashiru*

87 **First record of Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* for São Tomé and Príncipe** *Simon Valle and Madalena Patacho*

89 **Northward range extension for Littoral Rock Thrush *Monticola imerinus* in south-west Madagascar** *Charlie J. Gardner and Louise D. Jasper*

91 **First record of Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* for St. Helena, South Atlantic** *J. C. Hillman, Gavin Ellick, Kevin George and Dennis Leo*

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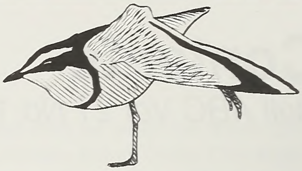
Club News



ABC is 20!

Elsewhere in this Bulletin (see pp. 4–9) you can read how the Club was the brainchild of a small but dedicated band of birders in the early 1990s. We have come a long way since then and probably none of that band could have envisaged that by now the Club would have supported *c*.170 projects across more than 30 countries in Africa. It has been very satisfying to see how support for our work has grown—and many people have helped along the way.

On Saturday 12 April we will hold our 20th Annual Meeting and AGM in the prestigious Flett Theatre at the Natural History Museum in London. We have contacted most of the 100+ Founder Members who provided extra support at the start and we hope that they and as many as other people as possible will be able to join us for this special milestone. Speakers during the day are Martin Woodcock, Achilles Byaruhanga, Roger Safford, Tim Birkhead, David Pearson and Jim Reynolds.

ABC Trustees

At the 2014 AGM we will be sorry to see two Trustees stand down. Danaë Sheehan will be known to many through her work at the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (BirdLife in the UK) and across many African countries. She has assisted the Club with the regional Representatives network, and has been invaluable in helping us to consider ways to extend the Club's activities. She joined Council in 2010. John Caddick has been a Council stalwart since 2004 acting as Treasurer in 2004–10 and Vice Chairman since then. But his greatest impact has been in overseeing our website development, incorporating many new features in the process. We shall miss them both, although feel sure that they will remain close to the Club. Council is always interested to hear from members who feel they may have time to help run the Club's many activities. If you can help in any way, please contact Keith Betton: chairman@africanbirdclub.org.

ABC Treasurer

Stephen Pringle has decided to undertake extensive studies as a mature student, meaning that he will need to relinquish his role as Treasurer at the end of 2014. Council is interested to hear from anyone who might wish to be considered for the role. Because ABC's bank is in the UK this really has to be someone who is UK-based. The key roles are: (1) maintain accurate, detailed and up-to-date records of the Club's income and expenditure, and financial reserves; (2) undertake or supervise the carrying out of all financial transactions on the Club's behalf, including the processing of direct debit and credit card transactions, payments by cheque, the collection of refunds from the Inland Revenue under Gift Aid, international money transfers, etc.; (3) advise ABC Council on all aspects of financial policy; (4) prepare an annual budget for approval by ABC Council; (5) prepare the annual accounts and present them to the AGM; and (6) ensure that the Club complies with all obligations arising from its charitable status (including submitting annual returns to the Charity Commission). If you think you may be able to help, please contact Stephen Pringle: treasurer@africanbirdclub.org

British Birdwatching Fair

Once again the Club attended the annual British Birdwatching Fair held at Rutland Water in August 2013. Around 20,000 enthusiasts attended over the three days, and we were pleased to meet many members there. Our thanks go to Adam Riley of Rockjumper who bravely represented ABC in the annual 'Bird Brain of Britain' contest, winning UK£250 for the Club in the process. In particular, we thank those members who gave their valuable time to help on the stand. The 2014 Birdfair dates are 15–17 August. We look forward to seeing many members there. If you think you can spare a couple of hours helping on the stand, please contact Nigel Birch: reps@africanbirdclub.org

Corporate Sponsorship 2014

The Club greatly values the support it receives from our Corporate Sponsors, whose membership contributes significantly to the Conservation Fund. This, in turn, awards grants for research on African birds and habitat conservation, a core aim of the Club. During 2013 it became clear that the existing corporate sponsorship package had become outdated and was, in several respects, no longer fit for purpose. After considerable consultation, including members' opinions and soundings from sponsors, Council has now offered a tiered structure; Bronze, Silver and Gold Corporate membership offer a sliding scale of benefits to both Club and Sponsor. Details can be found on the Club website, and the new structure became active on 1 January 2014.

At the time of writing, the Club is already delighted to welcome back many existing partners to the scheme:

- **Gold membership**: Ashanti African Tours, Birding Ecotours, Rockjumper.
- **Silver membership**: Birding and Beyond, Letaka Safaris, Safari Consultants.

Figure 1. Narcisse Ndayambaje receives binoculars and field guides for use by the Nyungwe Bird Watching Club in Rwanda (Caroline Caddick)

Narcisse Ndayambaje reçoit des jumelles et des guides pour le « Nyungwe Bird Watching Club » au Rwanda (Caroline Caddick)

Figure 2. First prize in the 2013 Conservation Fund Raffle, organised by Richard Charles, was a stunning pair of Swarovski Swarovision 8 × 32EL binoculars, generously donated by Swarovski. Left to right: Richard Charles, Christine Percy of Swarovski Optik UK and Keith Betton at the British Birdwatching Fair, Rutland, August 2013 (Geoff Orton)

Le premier prix de la tombola du Fonds pour la conservation du ABC, organisée par Richard Charles, était une splendide paire de jumelles Swarovski Swarovision 8 × 32EL, offerte généreusement par Swarovski. De gauche à droite : Richard Charles, Christine Percy (Swarovski Optik UK) et Keith Betton au British Birdwatching Fair, Rutland, août 2013 (Geoff Orton)

- **Bronze membership**: African Affinity, Birdfinders, Birdquest, Fieldguides, Lawson's Safaris, Nature's Wonderland Safaris, SafariWise, Sunbird, Venture Uganda.

Coincident with the new Corporate Sponsorship structure has been a significant upgrade to their exposure on our website. Almost every page displays two Sponsors' advertisements, in miniature, in random order. A click on this image brings up the full-size version, and a further click takes you to the Sponsor's own website, whilst keeping the ABC site open. We encourage you to explore this most attractive new facility. Fresh adverts and news of exciting forthcoming tour offers will be there to tempt your holiday plans for the year.

Again, it is our pleasure to thank all of our Corporate Sponsors for their invaluable contribution to the Club, and to African birds and their habitats. Anyone interested in discussing the scheme should contact Richard Charles: corporatesponsors@africanbirdclub.org.

Contributed by Keith Betton & Richard Charles

Binoculars and books for Rwanda

At the British Birdwatching Fair in August, Birding Africa facilitated a presentation of binoculars and field guides to Narcisse Ndayambaje, a specialist birding guide from Rwanda. These were destined for deserving young members of the Nyungwe Bird Watching Club, established by Narcisse in 2009 for the children of the local village. The objectives of the Club are to train the guides of the future and to educate the local community as to the importance of protecting their biologically diverse forest, home to 26 Albertine Rift endemics. Narcisse does this entirely out of his own commitment to birds and education. Tim Stowe of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds presented 22 pairs of binoculars and John Caddick presented four pairs on behalf of ABC (Fig. 1). Nigel Redman of Bloomsbury Publishing presented 20 field guides. If you have spare binoculars that you would like to see used in Africa or on other continents, please e-mail colin.hawkins@rspb.org.uk

Contributed by Marje Hemp & John Caddick

The African Bird Club—20 years of working for birds in Africa

Bill Quantrill

L'African Bird Club fête ses 20 ans. À l'occasion du vingtième anniversaire de l'African Bird Club, son histoire et ses réalisations sont brièvement présentées. Conçu en 1992 et lancé en mars 1994 par un groupe de personnes avec un intérêt commun pour l'ornithologie africaine, le Club s'est rapidement développé et compte à présent environ 1.250 membres dans 92 pays à travers le monde, dont 42 pays africains. Son Bulletin semestriel au contenu varié et dont les articles sont examinés par des spécialistes, est devenu une publication respectée qui compte actuellement 256 pages en moyenne par an. Le site web, lancé en 1995, quand l'internet était encore à ses débuts, attirait initialement environ 500 consultations par mois ; en l'espace de dix années, les consultations ont augmenté jusqu'à 36.000 par mois. Des nouveaux éléments y ont régulièrement été ajoutés, parmi lesquels la base de données « African Bird Image Database (AFBID) », auquel plus de 900 photographes ont contribué > 21.000 photos de 2.127 species. Depuis ses débuts en 1996, le Fonds pour la Conservation a permis à l'ABC de financer une grande diversité de projets de petite à moyenne taille à travers l'Afrique. À la fin de 2013 > UK£150,000 avaient été versées à 161 projets dans 39 pays. Finalement, il convient de remarquer que si l'ABC est un Club florissant, c'est grâce à ses nombreux volontaires qui donnent le meilleur d'eux-mêmes.

Origins

On 12 March 1994 some 180 people gathered at the Friends' Meeting House on Euston Road, London, for what was later described, in this Bulletin, as 'perhaps the largest-ever meeting in the UK to be devoted to African Ornithology'. The main business was to launch a new club that would focus on all things concerned with African birds and birding—namely, the African Bird Club. However, the origins of the Club go back to the summer of 1992, when a group of enthusiasts with a special interest in the continent first conceived the idea of a club that would do for the birds of the Afrotropical region what the Oriental Bird Club had done for Asia.

At the time there already existed several societies covering different parts of Africa, but no birding umbrella organisation for the continent as a whole. Recent political developments, not least in South Africa, meant that certain parts of the continent that had previously been difficult to access were opening up to visiting ornithologists, making it increasingly possible to consider the continent's ornithology as a whole, rather than a collection of self-contained sub-regions.

A launch committee was established under the chairmanship of Martin Woodcock (at the time deeply involved in producing the plates for the monumental *Birds of Africa*), with Richard Webb as Secretary and Gary Allport, Mark Andrews, John Fanshawe, Lincoln Fishpool, Paul Green, Annie Harrap, Peter Lack, Duncan Macdonald, Rod Martins and Iain Robertson as its other members. The committee's first task was to define the Club's purpose. To this end, they drew up a series of objectives, which were later reproduced on the inside front cover of the first issue of the ABC Bulletin as follows:

'The ABC aims to: provide a worldwide focus for African ornithology; encourage an interest in the conservation of the birds of the region; liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies; publish a twice-yearly colour bulletin; encourage observers to visit lesser known areas of the region; encourage observers to actively search for globally threatened and near threatened species; and develop a Conservation Research Fund'.

This statement of aims has stood the test of time—the only modification in 20 years has been the re-writing of the final aim as 'run the ABC Conservation Programme'.

Membership

The committee next addressed the matter of recruiting a core membership to raise the capital needed to float the Club. To achieve this, they contacted everyone with a known interest in African birds, inviting them to subscribe UK£30 to become founder members: 191 did so by the time of the inaugural meeting in March 1994 and a further 88 joined before the Founder Member scheme closed at the end of the year. More than half of those 279 remain members to this day.

Executive Officers of the African Bird Club 1994–2014

Chairman

Martin Woodcock 1994–98
Phil Atkinson 1998–2005
Richard Webb 2005–08
Keith Betton 2008–

Vice-Chairman

Geoff Randall 1998–2000
Keith Betton 2002–06
Phil Atkinson 2008–10
John Caddick 2010–14

Treasurer

Colin Humpage 1994–97
Jonathan Gibbons 1997–98
Alan Williams 1998–2004
John Caddick 2004–10
Alan Williams 2010–13
Stephen Pringle 2013–

Secretary

Richard Webb 1994–96
Bill Quantrill 1996–2002
Julie Childs 2002–03
Flip Bruce-Lockhart 2003–05
Geoff Randall 2005–10
Sue Walsh 2010–12
Geoff Orton 2012–

By the time of the March 1994 meeting 376 people had joined as members (including founders). Numbers increased steadily from then on, passing the 800 mark in the first year and the 1,000 mark in 1996, before finally peaking at just over 1,300 in January 1999. Since then the total has decreased slightly and in recent years has mostly fluctuated around 1,250. Some 10% of members do not renew each year, to be replaced by a roughly equal number of recruits. Altogether, just fewer than 3,000 individuals have been members of the Club at some stage during its lifetime. A survey of why members choose not to renew their membership revealed that the two principal reasons were (i) financial and (ii) a decision not to plan further visits to Africa. Almost nobody left because of dissatisfaction with the Club.

Members have come from 92 different countries and from all five continents. From Africa, we have had members in 42 countries including all of the mainland states except Libya, Lesotho, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea. The 50 non-African countries include 24 in Europe, 19 in Asia, three in Latin America and two each in North America and Australasia. Special efforts have been made to enable African members to join via local payment arrangements and the supported and associate membership schemes.

With such a widely scattered membership, it was always going to be problematic to know how best to engage with members. The original intention was to organise regular meetings, in Africa as well as in the UK and possibly other European countries. In the UK a day-long programme has been arranged annually to coincide with the AGM, usually in London. These meetings have generally been successful but they have been accessible to just a small proportion of the membership. There have also been occasional evening meetings held in conjunction with local bird clubs. Arranging meetings in Africa has proved difficult. Members of ABC Council have attended all five Pan African Ornithological Congresses held since the Club was founded, and the 1998 International Ornithological Congress held in Durban, and these events have provided opportunities for some Club members from Africa and elsewhere to meet. But, otherwise, the logistics of organising meetings in Africa have proved to be beyond the Club's capabilities.

Another opportunity for Council members to interact with the broader membership is provided by the annual British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water (Figs. 1–2). ABC has manned a stand at the fair annually since 1994 and as the fair has expanded in size over the years, so increasing numbers of ABC members, from the UK, Europe, even Africa and elsewhere in the world, have visited the Club's stand.

Birth of the Bulletin

The original assumption was that the main means of communicating with members would be via written publications, dispatched by post. Such publications, in the form of the twice-yearly Bulletin, have indeed proved important, although the internet has come to be at least equally so, which was unanticipated at the time of the Club's foundation.

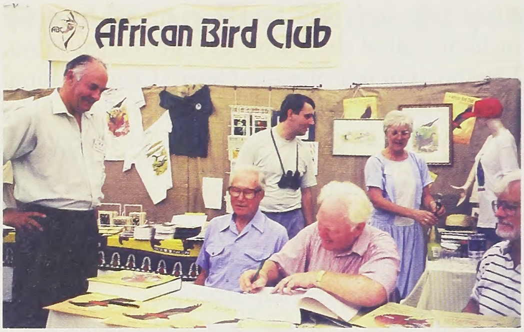


Figure 1. The Club's stand at the British Birdwatching Fair, Rutland, August 1997, with Martin Woodcock (far left) looking on as the editors of *The Birds of Africa* sign copies of their work, left to right, Stuart Keith, Hilary Fry and Emil Urban, with (behind) Roy Hargreaves and Barbara Woodcock (photographer unknown)

Le stand du Club au Birdfair de Rutland, Royaume-Uni, août 1997, avec Martin Woodcock (à l'extrême gauche) observant les rédacteurs de *The Birds of Africa* signant des exemplaires de leur livre, de gauche à droite, Stuart Keith, Hilary Fry et Emil Urban, avec derrière eux Roy Hargreaves et Barbara Woodcock (photographe inconnu). Dès ses débuts, le Club a eu un stand au Birdfair, un événement annuel qui attire des milliers de « birdwatchers ».

Figure 2. Founder member, launch committee member and former Art Editor of *Bull. ABC* Mark Andrews at the British Birdwatching Fair, Rutland Water, UK, in August 2005 (John Caddick)

Membre fondateur, membre du comité de lancement et ancien éditeur artistique du *Bull. ABC* Mark Andrews au British Birdwatching Fair, Rutland Water, Royaume-Uni, en août 2005 (John Caddick)

The question of publications was inevitably high on the Launch Committee's agenda. An editorial subcommittee was set up to recommend the type of publications the Club should produce. Initially, it was envisaged that the Club would publish an annual, peer-reviewed journal and a separate bulletin containing news about the Club's activities and non-scientific material such as site guides and book reviews. However, this plan met with objections from the editors and publishers of journals such as *Ostrich* and *Malimbus*, who argued that there were already sufficient outlets for scientific papers. Thus, the idea of a journal was discarded, in favour of a twice-yearly Bulletin to include members' news and views, a round-up of recent sightings, species identification guides and site guides, with the possibility of publishing some scientific papers.

The Editorial Team then set about commissioning material for the first issue of the Bulletin, which was published to coincide with the March 1994 inaugural meeting. The fruit of their efforts was a 52-page magazine containing 13 articles, with features on specific species (ground hornbills *Bucorvus* spp. and Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*) and groups of species (bulbuls of Upper Guinea), a site of special interest (Mount Kupe in Cameroon), book reviews, recent ornithological news from Africa and an article by John Fanshawe summarising the birding infrastructure of all 61 countries and archipelagos included within the Club's remit.

Since then the Bulletin has gone from strength to strength. The first seven issues were produced by the editorial subcommittee, but as the workload increased it became clear that production was proving too big a commitment for a voluntary team working in their spare time. In 1997 a decision was taken to appoint a professional editor to manage the production, with the Editorial Board providing guidance. Guy Kirwan was appointed to this role, subsequently supported by Ron Demey, and since then they have together been responsible for bringing out on schedule 14 further volumes of ever-increasing size—a typical recent volume consists of 256 pages with more than 40 features and articles.

Over the years the Bulletin has filled an invaluable role in publishing a steady flow of new information about the distribution and behaviour of Africa's birds—additions to national lists, range extensions and even the discovery of new species. The first issue contained the 'unofficial background story' to the discovery, by Thomas Lehmberg and Lars Dinesen (both founder members of ABC), of Udzungwa Forest Partridge *Xenoperdix udzungwensis*, a species and genus new to science (their first sight of it was of 'two small chicken-like feet….at the bottom of the pot' in which their evening meal had been cooked—the amazing story can be read in *Bull. ABC* 1: 24–25, available on the Club website if you do not have the original publication).

ABC on the web

The Club first launched an internet site in May 1995, at a time when the web was still so much of a novelty that, in announcing the news to the membership in *Bull. ABC* 2(2), it was thought necessary to explain what the internet was! Our first website, containing brief background information about the Club and a downloadable membership application form, was shared with the three other UK-based international bird clubs, Oriental Bird Club, Neotropical Bird Club and the Ornithological Society of the Middle East. It initially attracted *c.*500 hits a month, a rate that grew to 36,000 'page views' a month within ten years. By 1997, it had become obvious that the Club needed more capacity. So, in November 1997, we entered into a new agreement that gave us much-expanded web space and our own domain name, www.africanbirdclub.org.

Since then the site has expanded with new features being added regularly. In September 2003 a secure payment facility was added to permit subscriptions and purchases of Club merchandise online. Next, a searchable database of African ornithological literature was developed and a start was made on constructing individual pages for every African country with detailed information on local services relevant to the needs of visiting birders plus information on the local avifauna. Later, in 2004, the quarterly African bird ID challenge was started and in 2005 the African Bird Image Database (AFBID) was launched as a joint operation funded by Bird Explorers and with help from Birding Africa. Within three months, 117 photographers had contributed 2,314 images of 930 species. Most recently, more than 900 photographers have contributed >21,000 images of 2,127 species. In 2008, ABC participated in the creation of a website devoted to African bird vocalisations, in partnership with Xeno-canto, which had previously developed a similar website of Latin American bird sounds.

Other features of the website have included downloadable checklists for every country in Africa and translations of key pages into French and Portuguese. An e-mail discussion group, AfricanBirding@yahoogroups.com, initiated and moderated by ABC, has some 1,600 members and has proven very popular. It is used to disseminate new information quickly and acts as a question-and-answer forum for topics such as species identification and travel.

By 2012 the website was becoming more difficult to maintain, lacked a consistent structure throughout and was looking dated. A professional website development company was commissioned to construct a new website and to migrate all of the existing content, some 1,500 pages. This brought together all of the features of the previous site in a logically constructed, simple-to-navigate and easy-to-use site. The redesigned site became operational in March 2013.

Particular credit should be given to Alan Wilkinson, who set up the first website and steered it through the early years, and to Phil Atkinson and John Caddick who have developed it into the multi-featured resource that exists today.

Conservation

From the outset, the Club's founders were determined that ABC should not just be a club for people who wanted to observe and study birds in Africa, but that it should promote the conservation of birds and their habitats—that the Club should be seen to be, in the words of its logo, 'Working for birds in Africa'. To this end, the Club has sought to increase awareness of threats to birds in Africa, to encourage people to visit some lesser known areas of the continent and to gather data about the state of birds in them, to support local birding and conservation organisations, and to generally promote knowledge of and concern for bird populations.

Specifically, the Club operates the Conservation Programme, financed via the Conservation Fund. Establishing such a fund was anticipated in the original statement of the Club's objectives in 1994 and was formally launched at the 9th Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) in Ghana in late 1996, with an initial allocation of UK£2,000 from the Club's reserves, followed by another UK£8,000 in 1997. Since then resources have come from profits from sales of Club merchandise, donations from Club members and sponsorship by companies and individuals of selected projects.

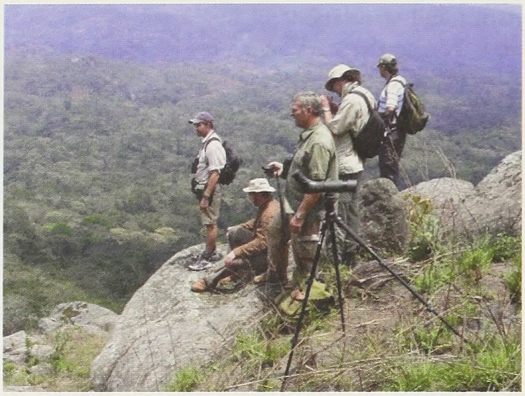


Figure 3. The first ABC Conservation Tour group on the rocky escarpment, home to the endemic Angola Cave Chat *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*, overlooking Kumbira Forest, Angola, October 2005 (John Caddick). Subsequent tours have visited Gabon (2006), Rwanda (2011) and Zimbabwe and Mozambique (2012).

Le groupe du premier « ABC Conservation Tour » sur l'escarpement rocheux, habitat de l'endémique Cossyphe des grottes *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*, surplombant la forêt de Kumbira, Angola, octobre 2005 (John Caddick). Ces voyages ont pour but de visiter des endroits qui ne sont généralement pas inclus dans les itinéraires ornithologiques ; les organisateurs acceptent de céder une partie des bénéfices au Fonds pour la Conservation. Les voyages suivants ont visité le Gabon (2006), le Rwanda (2011) et le Zimbabwe et le Mozambique (2012).

Figure 4. The ABC representative in Madagascar, Julien Ramanampamonjy (right), welcomes the Director-General of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, and the Director for National Education and Scientific Research to the ABC stand at the Malagasy Birdfair in October 2006 (Julien Ramanampamonjy)

Le représentant du ABC à Madagascar, Julien Ramanampamonjy (à droite), accueille le Directeur général du Ministère de Environnement, Eaux et Forêts et le Directeur de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche scientifique au stand du Club au Malagasy Birdfair en octobre 2006 (Julien Ramanampamonjy)

ABC Conservation Tours (Fig. 3), initiated in 2005, have proved to be another useful source of funding. Under the scheme, tours are arranged to parts of Africa not covered by the standard African birding itineraries, with the organisers donating a share of the profits to the Conservation Fund. The fund has also benefited from income raised by local payment schemes. In countries where these have been established, subscription income in local currency has been used to finance in-country conservation projects.

The first expenditure from the fund was UK£800 to help pay for the attendance of Africans at the PAOC in Ghana. This was followed by a grant of UK£770 to the Ornithological Association of Zimbabwe, to help cover the costs of a training course for 15 A-level or undergraduate students interested in birds and their conservation. In 1998 seven projects were financed, covering a wide range of activities from environmental education to research on endangered species. Further projects followed as the programme gained momentum. By the end of 2006, ten years after the its launch, >80 projects in 27 countries had been supported to a total value of more than UK£50,000. Since then the programme has continued to accelerate, thus by the end of 2013 >UK£150,000 had been distributed among 161 projects in 39 countries. Twenty-one awards totaling in excess of UK£31,000 were made in 2013 alone. Much of this has been made possible by the generous sponsorship of companies and private individuals—some 40% of expenditure in 2013 came from this source.

1999 saw the launch of the ABC / NHBS Book Awards, a collaboration between the Club and the Natural History Book Service whereby the latter provided up to five UK£100 vouchers annually for three years, to be redeemed against books from their catalogue, while ABC identified suitable recipients. Awards were made in the first year to Aride Island Nature Reserve (Seychelles), Makerere University (Uganda) and the Ethiopian Wildlife & Natural History Society. Altogether, 13 awards were made during the three years of the scheme.

Also launched in 1999 was the ABC Expedition award under which an award of UK£1000 was made available annually for ornithological expeditions to or within Africa. Unlike standard awards, which are available only to residents of African countries, expedition awards are open to anyone. The first award, in 2000, supported the costs of a multidisciplinary expedition to the island of Annobón in Equatorial Guinea, undertaken by a joint team of Spanish and local biologists. Among other work, the team censused seabird populations and researched the habitat requirements of five passerine species endemic to the Gulf of Guinea islands.

Subsequent awards have included contributions to the costs of an Oxford University expedition in collaboration with the Rare & Endangered Species Trust to determine population densities of three vulture species in the Waterberg Plateau Park in Namibia, a Glasgow University expedition to study two rare endemics in southern Ethiopia in collaboration with the Ethiopian Wildlife & Natural History Society, and an expedition organised jointly by Cambridge University and the Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia to search for the Liberian Greenbul *Phyllastrephus leocolepsis*, a species known only from the type specimen taken in 1984.

For the development of the impressive conservation programme, we are much indebted to the members of the Conservation Committee, chaired initially by Rob Lucking (1998–2002), then by Steph Tyler (2002–10) and currently by Chris Magin.

The African Bird Club at 20

That small band of optimists who in 1992 first dreamed of the ABC can look back with justified pride at the Club's achievements. Today, ABC is thriving and has three particular strengths: the Bulletin, the conservation programme and the website. All of this has been achieved largely through the unpaid efforts of the many volunteers who have given freely of their time to make the Club the success it is today. More than 60 individuals have at one time or another served on ABC Council. Others have helped man ABC stands at bird fairs, promoted sales of Club merchandise and generally acted as ambassadors for the Club. And, we should not forget the contribution made by our overseas representatives—42 of them at the latest count, although others have also served in the past—working to maintain our membership, to keep us informed of developments in their countries and to offer support to visiting ABC members if requested. With support like that, there is no doubt that the Club will flourish for decades to come.

Finally a tribute to our Presidents: Martin Woodcock, who contributed so much to the Club in its early days and has maintained a close interest ever since, became the first President after stepping down as Chairman in 1998 and continued in the post for the full ten years permitted under the Club's Constitution. As his successor we are privileged to have Tasso Leventis, a Founder Member of ABC, a director of the worldwide Leventis Group of companies and an active participant in international efforts to encourage sustainable development.

c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, UK.

Corrigenda

Bull. ABC 20(2)

In the paper on 'Bird observations around Juba, South Sudan', Figs. 5–7 were transposed; Fig. 5 should be labelled 7, Fig. 6 should be 5 and Fig. 7 should be 6.

In the reference list of the same paper, 'Mallalieu, M. in press' should read:

Mallalieu, M. 2013. First records for South Sudan of African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*, Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* and White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus*, and first sighting of Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*. *Bull. ABC* 20: 71–74.

African Bird Club *Conservation Fund*

New awards

The Conservation Committee reviewed 27 proposals ahead of the October 2013 Council meeting and recommended eight for funding. Council approved all eight projects and ABC funds totalling UK£9,339 were allocated to six; the other two were generously sponsored in their entirety by Tasso Leventis. A total of £12,280 was therefore released as follows.

Grey Crowned Crane in the Doho wetlands, eastern Uganda

Sarah Nachuha of the Islamic University in Uganda received UK£1,500 to investigate the current status of the Vulnerable Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* at Doho wetlands, an Important Bird Area. The last study was conducted by Gumony and Mafabi in 1989. The project intends to: (1) assess the current population size and distribution of the species; (2) target schools and local communities to improve local stakeholders' understanding of wetland ecosystem functions as well as the ecology of Grey Crowned Crane; and (3) develop a comprehensive site-specific conservation strategy for this crane to inform subsequent research and interventions.

Grey Crowned Crane / Grue royale *Balearica regulorum* (Adam Riley)

Bird survey in Dzombo Hill Forest, Kenya

Dzombo Hill Forest in Kwale District covers 295 ha and is among the larger fragments of the biodiversity rich coastal forests of East Africa. It is home to *c.*35 forest-dependent species including the Endangered Sokoke Pipit *Anthus sokokensis* and three Near Threatened species. Ten coastal forest biome species of the 30 known to occur in Kenya and two restricted-range species occur in the forest, although it is suspected more may be present including the Endangered Spotted Ground Thrush *Geokichla* (*Zoothera*) *guttata*. Increasing human encroachment has probably had an adverse effect on bird populations at this site over the past few decades. Esther Wangui of the National Museums of Kenya received an Expedition Award of UK£1,996 to assess the avifaunal diversity, threats, and document the presence or absence of all bird species of conservation concern in the forest.

Discovering the lost jewel of Sierra Leone: searching for the Emerald Starling

Emerald Starling *Lamprotornis iris* is a beautiful but poorly known bird species endemic to the Upper Guinea region of West Africa, where it is known from just a few sites in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Ivory Coast; it is categorised as Data Deficient on the IUCN Red List. Because the lack of knowledge of its ecology, movements and population size hampers an accurate assessment of its status, Sama Monde of the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) was awarded UK£1,500—generously sponsored by Tasso Leventis—to review the species' conservation status in Sierra Leone and Guinea. The project aims to: (1) increase understanding of the species' distribution, habitat associations and conservation status; (2) better understand threats to the species; (3) improve capacity of West African conservation organisations to undertake surveys, monitoring and species protection work, via a transboundary project; and (4) increase awareness and monitoring of potential trade issues.

Long-billed Tailorbird / Couturière de Moreau *Artisornis moreaui* (Adam Scott Kennedy)

Tailor-made forest management for Long-billed Tailorbird in Tanzania

Long-billed Tailorbird *Artisornis moreaui* is considered Critically Endangered. Two disjunct subpopulations are known, one in Tanzania and the other in Mozambique, *c.*1,000 km apart. Their taxonomic relatedness requires further attention. The East Usambara Mountains in Tanzania hold *c.*80% of the species' known population. Nsajigwa Kyonjole, working with Norbert Cordeiro, received UK£1,500 to investigate the effects of reduced human disturbance at forest edges in the Amani Nature Reserve. The project aims to increase understanding of the habitat requirements of this species; improve the quality of forest edge habitat for it; engage local stakeholders in supporting this work; and build capacity for nature conservation in Tanzania.

Survey in Congo-Brazzaville

Tchimpounga Nature Reserve in the Lower Kouilou basin, Republic of Congo, one of BirdLife's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and home to several globally threatened and poorly known bird species, is managed by the Jane Goodall Institute but is closed to visitors and no ornithological research has been conducted there despite the area's significance for birds. Dr Stuart Sharp of Lancaster University received UK£1,441—kindly sponsored by Tasso Leventis—to conduct baseline surveys over two weeks at Tchimpounga together with Malcolm Wilson of African Affinity, in order to quantify the reserve's importance for avian biodiversity, assess the potential for long-term ornithological research, and provide basic training in bird identification and survey techniques to the local Congolese reserve staff.

Conservation education in the Taita Hills, Kenya

Lawrence Wagura of the National Museums of Kenya was awarded UK£1,347 to implement environmental education for school students via guided nature walks. He will target schools near the remnant forest fragments around Wundanyi, which have high endemicity and harbour small populations of the Critically Endangered Taita Apalis *Apalis fuscigularis*.

Impact of fire on birds in Serengeti

The use of fire as a management tool is widespread in Tanzania, both by conservationists and pastoralists. Elliot Kinsey of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute in South Africa was awarded UK£1,500 to further his research into the

Fisher's Lovebird / Inséparable de Fischer *Agapornis fischeri* (Nik Borrow) impact of different fire regimes on birds in the savannahs of the Serengeti. His key research question is: how does avian species composition change with fire frequency and seasonality across a range of habitat conditions? Management of fire has conservation implications for many species, particularly for birds such as Grey-breasted Spurfowl *Pternistis rufopictus*, the Near Threatened Fischer's Lovebird *Agapornis fischeri*, Usambiro Barbet *Trachyphonus darnaudii usambiro*, Rufous-tailed Weaver *Histurgops ruficaudus* and Grey-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops poliolophus*.

Conservation of Anyiko wetland in Kenya

Anyiko wetland lies *c*.90 km north-east of Kisumu, in Nyanza province, and is potentially home to many different birds including Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*, Papyrus Gonolek *Laniarius mufumbiri*, Carruthers's Cisticola *Cisticola carruthersi*, Papyrus Yellow Warbler *Calamonastides* (*Chloropeta*) *gracilirostris*, White-winged Swamp Warbler *Bradypterus carpalis* and Papyrus Canary *Crithagra koliensis*. Zeph Migeni of the Tembea Youth Centre for Sustainable Development was awarded UK£1,496 to support a community-based conservation project. Planned activities include a comprehensive survey of the birds present and the threats facing them, establishing regular bird walks in the area, educational outreach, including awareness-raising activities, and introducing sustainable methods of papyrus harvesting.

Papyrus Gonolek / Gonolek des papyrus *Laniarius mufumbiri* (Nik Borrow)

Reports received

Survey of Red-shouldered Vanga in Madagascar

Red-shouldered Vanga *Calicalicus rufocarpalis* is a Malagasy endemic classified as Vulnerable. First described in 1997, it inhabits a small area of the spiny forest in south-west Madagascar. In 2011 Sama Zefania was awarded UK£991 for a survey within the species' known distribution. Field work was conducted on 21 August–22 December 2011. A total of 129 vangas were observed, but the species occurred at low densities (1–3 individuals / ha of transect) throughout the surveyed regions. New locations for the species were identified in remote parts of Tsimanampetsotsa National Park, increasing its known range. However, increased human disturbance to the forest near the Ankilibe road to St. Augustin appears to have caused a decline in the species' density at the northern limit of its range.

Sokoke Pipit survey

Arabuko-Sokoke forest is the largest remnant of a once-contiguous mass of East African coastal forest. Part of the Eastern Arc Mountain and Coastal Forest biodiversity hotspot and regarded as the one of the most important habitats for bird conservation in Africa, it harbours nine globally threatened and four regionally threatened species. However, the forest is threatened by encroachment and degradation from the adjacent human community, which relies heavily on it for various resources. In 2011, Nickson Otieno received UK£1,165 for a survey of Sokoke Pipit *Anthus sokokensis*, an Endangered species, and to examine the effect of tree removal in three blocks of *Brachystegia* woodland (Narasha, Kararacha and Jilore) on the species' density and distribution. Over a period of two weeks in November 2011 and two weeks in February 2012, six transects totalling 6 km were used to survey pipit's population and sample key vegetation structure, depth of leaf litter and the main forms of human activity. The species' overall density was 0.72 ± 0.15 birds / ha, with an estimated population of 5,544 in *Brachystegia* woodland. Logging had a significant negative effect on pipit density, especially the removal of small trees. The species was positively correlated with deeper leaf litter. Overall, the intensity of human activity had little influence on the species' spatial occurrence despite selective logging constituting an important part of this activity. Nickson and his colleagues concluded that logging is not the only cause of tree removal and suggested that elephant activity might be a significant contributor to this form of habitat degradation for Sokoke Pipit, since Arabuko-Sokoke is believed to harbour 100–200 African Elephants *Loxodonta africana*. Long term, Sokoke Pipit will require continued control of illegal logging as well as regulation of elephant damage across the forest especially in *Brachystegia* woodland.

Lesser Flamingo disease in Kenya

In February 2012 Juliet Kinyua, a Kenyan Ph.D. student based at Texas Tech University in the USA, received UK£1,430 for her project 'Investigating the dynamics of mosquito vector populations within lake ecosystems: the case of East African Rift Valley lakes Nakuru, Bogoria and Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) mass-die offs'. In the last two decades, East Africa has experienced episodic mass die-offs of Lesser Flamingos at the Rift Valley lakes of Nakuru, Elementaita and Bogoria in Kenya, and Manyara and Natron in Tanzania. The episodes include *c*.40,000 mortalities in 1993, 20,000 in 1995 and 50,000 in 2000. In 2004 >50,000 Lesser Flamingos died in Tanzania. Currently, the species is categorised as Near Threatened by IUCN and is undergoing a 'moderately rapid reduction' in numbers. Numerous factors have been linked to these die-offs including heavy metal poisoning, cyanobacterial toxins, pesticide residues, septicemia and avian tuberculosis. One of the neglected factors in the investigation of the mass die offs is vector borne zoonotic diseases, particularly mosquito-borne arboviruses. The study involved the collection of mosquitoes around Nakuru and Bogoria in December 2012–January 2013. Using EVS CO2 baited traps, 2,212 mosquitoes were collected from four genera *Culex*, *Aedes*, *Mansonia* and *Anopheles*. They were identified with the help of entomologists at the Kenya Medical Research Institute. The samples were to be sent to Texas Tech Vector laboratory for screening. Prior to travelling to Kenya, with the help of staff at the Institute of Environment and Human Health at Texas Tech University, all necessary permits to ship biological samples from Kenya to the USA were obtained and correct field work procedures identified and followed. However, despite this, the US Centre for Disease Control prevented the samples from leaving Kenya because the species listed are possible vectors for Biosafety Level 3 and 4 agents. The samples therefore remain unanalysed, but the information gathered has been sufficient to spark further interest into mosquito populations at the Rift Valley Lakes.

Situation getting tighter for a Kenyan apalis

Also in February 2012, Luca Borghesio was awarded UK£900—sponsored by Tasso Leventis—to survey the Critically Endangered Taita Apalis *Apalis fuscigularis* in the Taita Hills, Kenya. Field work concentrated on Msidunyi, a 7.1-ha forest fragment only recently discovered to support the species. Eight territorial pairs were estimated to occur there as of May 2013, or 2.4–5.2% of the global population (*c*.310–654 individuals) or 3.7–7.6% of the estimated 210–430 mature individuals. This confirmed the site as a stronghold for Taita Apalis. Other endemic and globally threatened taxa such as the trees *Dasylepis integra* (Eastern Arc endemic; Vulnerable) and *Prunus africana* (Vulnerable) were also recorded, and the field work underlined the extreme urgency of preventing the destruction of the tiny area of remaining forest. Damage caused by logging, which is not illegal as the area is not government-owned, was considerable. If this continues, little forest soon will soon be left.

Grey Crowned Cranes in Kampala

In May 2012 Dylis Ndibaisa of A Rocha Uganda was awarded UK£1,500 to undertake the first-ever survey of the Endangered Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* in Kampala. Four wetlands within the city—Walufumbe, Nakivubo, Kansanga and Lubigi—were surveyed weekly between September 2012 and August 2013. At Kiteezi landfill, 55–86 birds were found, five juveniles and 50–81 adults. By day, the cranes fed at the landfill and in nearby Walufumbe; at night they roosted on electricity pylons sited in the wetland. Key threats to the Kiteezi flock included limb injuries at the landfill and wetland reclamation. The largest number of cranes recorded at Kansanga was six, including one juvenile. At Lubigi, three cranes including one young were found. They fed at several places and roosted on trees within the wetland. Two cranes were found at Nakivubo. These fed along the railway line and roosted on a pylon in the wetland. There was little evidence of successful breeding. On 29 February 2013, two birds copulated on an electricity pylon. No nests were discovered, but on 10 July 2013, three chicks estimated to be just three days old were observed at Walufumbe. Unfortunately, one week later the wetland was burned following a change in the land's ownership. Three weeks later, one of the chicks was killed by dogs. The lack of breeding success underlines the need for greater efforts to make people aware of the importance of protecting Uganda's national bird.

Djibouti raptor migration

Egyptian Vulture / Percnoptère d'Égypte *Neophron percnopterus* (Nik Borrow)

The Bab el Mandeb Strait between Djibouti and Yemen forms part of the Rift Valley / Red Sea flyway, the second-most important route for migrant soaring birds in the world. More than 1.5 million birds of 37 species use the strait each year to move between Eurasia and Africa, as it represents the shortest water crossing south of Suez; the Djibouti side is an Important Bird Area (IBA), but has been little studied. In 2010 Houssein Rayaleh of Djibouti Nature received UK£1,000, sponsored by Julian Francis, for a study of the Djibouti Francolin *Pternistis ochropectus* in the Mabla Mountains (see *Bull. ABC* 17: 8–9). However, continued insecurity meant that it was impracticable to conduct field work, so in February 2013 Houssein requested the funds support a raptor migration survey, supplemented with an additional UK£347 from ABC (*Bull. ABC* 20: 134). The survey took place on 2–10 March 2013 at Ras Siyyan on the Djibouti side of the Bab el Mandeb. The observers were particularly interested in the movements of Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* (Endangered). ABC is grateful to Julian Francis for allowing the funds to be transferred. A full report on the survey appears elsewhere in this issue (see pp. 64–71). In addition, with the assistance of Mike McGrady from International Avian Research, Krems, Austria, the Djibouti Nature team caught an adult Egyptian Vulture at the town of Tadjourah. In a collaborative venture with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, the bird—named Assamo—was fitted with a 40-g GPS-PTT using a backpack harness. The transmitter is solar powered and has a theoretical life of several years. It is programmed to acquire eight GPS locations per day and send data via satellite every 2.5 days (see http://egyptianvulturedjibouti.blogspot.co.at/). By the end of December 2013 Assamo was still transmitting and had mainly been in Djibouti and the Ethiopian town of Adigala, close to the Somali border, with one foray into Eritrea.

African Bird Club *Conservation Fund*

Hooded Vulture survey in Accra

Vulture populations are declining throughout Africa. This led to the reclassification (in 2012) of Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* from a conservation status of Least Concern to Endangered. In 2013, Japeth Roberts of the Ghana Wildlife Society received UK£1,430 to survey the species in the Ghanaian capital Accra. A total of 257 vultures was counted at 14 roosts within the Accra Metropolitan Area of 300 km^2. *Bombax* was the preferred roost tree, with all known roosts using this genus. Trees were 19–28 m high, with diameter-at-breast height of 110–163 cm. Roosts were all within green zones in the city. Based on interviews, there was a lack of knowledge of the species' threatened status, with some hunting for body parts (for use in traditional medicine) ongoing and one collector was encountered who supplied Nigerian buyers. The felling of roost trees is the major threat, with trees being most frequently cut because faecal waste from the roosting vultures is a nuisance to local people.

Poisoning of Southern Ground Hornbill in South Africa

Lucy Kemp of the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project was awarded UK£1,500 to part-fund a workshop to raise awareness of the threat to Southern Ground Hornbills *Bucorvus leadbeateri* from poisoning. According to the South African Bird Atlas Project 2, Southern Ground Hornbill has had the swiftest range contraction of any bird species in South Africa over the last 20–30 years. Now listed as Vulnerable globally, the species is considered Endangered nationally with just 400–450 groups in the country. The workshop was held on 16 October 2013, facilitated by Dr Gerhard Verdoorn, and the 13 participants agreed an action plan to combat the threat of poisoning from sources such as deliberate predator baiting, agricultural applications and disused cattle-dipping tanks. Council thanks the Puffback Fund for kindly sponsoring this award.

Dr Chris Magin, Conservation Officer,
on behalf of the Conservation Committee

The ABC website (www.africanbirdclub.org/conservation-fund-past-projects) shows the full list of conservation projects and awards made since the inception of the programme over a decade ago. **A remarkable total in excess of UK£165,000 has been donated during this period.** You can also view many of the final project reports—including full versions of those summarised above—by clicking on the hyperlinks on the webpage.

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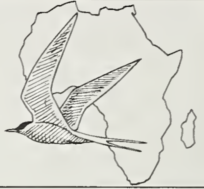


Compiled by Ron Demey, Guy M. Kirwan and Peter Lack

General

International response to the fate of migrant birds in North Africa

Over the last few months, the indiscriminate and unsustainable killing of migrant birds in North Africa has become an issue of public concern in a growing number of countries, although the widespread hunting and trapping of migratory birds in Egypt and also Libya, especially using mist-nets along large stretches of the Mediterranean coast, has been known for some years. In response, the BirdLife Partnership, government agencies, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds are addressing the situation. "Bird trapping in these countries is an ancient tradition. The main target species, Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, is a local delicacy", said Marcus Kohler, BirdLife's Senior Programme Manager for Flyways. "It's a legitimate way for local people to supplement their diet. However, the indiscriminate nature and scale of the trapping has now reached worrying proportions and is having an impact upon other species." It's not only quail that are caught; many other species, such as European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* and Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*, are trapped as 'bycatch' in significant numbers. The increasing use and magnitude of mist net-trapping is a new and worrying development. Current estimates are that millions of birds are caught each autumn en route from Eurasia to their wintering grounds in sub-Saharan Africa. In response, an international meeting brought together key people and organisations, including participants from both the government and non-governmental sectors from Egypt and Libya. The meeting was convened in late 2013 in Bonn, Germany, and included representatives from the BirdLife Partnership, NABU (BirdLife in Germany), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in the UK) and Nature Conservation Egypt (the BirdLife Partner) and the Secretariats of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. The meeting agreed a detailed plan of action to accurately measure the scale and impact of the problem, and to examine the socio-economic and legal aspects of bird trapping. It was also agreed that there is a need to ensure that effective legislation and regulations are in place and being adequately enforced while building capacity of local government, NGOs and communities to effectively address indiscriminate trapping in the region. "The illegal and unsustainable killing of birds is a global issue that BirdLife Partners are committed to tackling. While there have been significant and encouraging improvements in several countries over the last 20 years, many others need to step up and deal with this increasing and unsustainable practice. It is heartening to see commitment from the Egyptian and Libyan governments. The BirdLife Partnership is fully committed to support them in their efforts", said Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International's Chief Executive.

Source: BirdLife International press release, December 2013

Migration routes of Montagu's Harriers revealed

A ten-year study of satellite-tagged Montagu's Harriers *Circus pygargus*, initiated by a Dutch working group, has revealed the migration routes, stopover sites and wintering areas of this raptor. Through international cooperation, researchers succeeded in tagging 50 Montagu's Harriers from five north European countries, from the Netherlands and Denmark to Belarus. It appears the harriers possess three migration routes: a western route via Spain, a central route via Italy and a hitherto undescribed eastern route via Greece. Western populations winter mainly in the western Sahel, whilst eastern populations generally winter in the central and eastern Sahel, but there is some overlap and populations are not strictly separated at this season. Individual birds exhibited strong site fidelity. Counts of locusts and grasshoppers, the staple diet of harriers in the Sahel, revealed that the birds followed the highest densities of these insects. The study also found that, during their return journey, many harriers stop in north-west Africa, where breeding larks constitute welcome prey. The importance of north-west Africa for migrating Montagu's Harriers of the western populations was previously unknown.

Source: Montagu's Harrier Working Group press release, 15 January 2014

...and of Long-tailed Skuas

Olivier Gilg and co-workers tracked the movements of eight adult Long-tailed Skuas *Stercorarius longicaudus* fitted with small light-level geolocators on their breeding grounds in the Arctic, on Svalbard and north-east Greenland. Being the most strongly pelagic of the three smaller skua species, little was known of its migration and the individual wintering areas. On their southbound journey, most birds arrived off Mauritania and Senegal in early September, with several following the West African coast to the Gulf of Guinea. Five travelled further offshore between Cameroon and Angola, which is remarkable as the species is almost unknown in this region. The others remained in the central Atlantic or crossed to the Brazilian coast, but in December–March all eight used wintering grounds in the Southern Hemisphere at 0–40°S, between the Gulf of Guinea and waters south of Madagascar. On their return migration, which commenced in early March–April, most used a more westerly route. Over one year, the skuas flew between 43,900 and 54,200 km, and travelled as far as 10,500–13,700 km from their breeding grounds.

Source: PLoS ONE *8: e64614. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0064614*

Black-tailed Godwit improves distance record

A satellite-tracked female Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* that successfully bred in Noord Holland, the Netherlands, reached Sierra Leone on 27 July 2013, 5,400 km from her breeding site—the longest distance ever recorded for a godwit breeding in the Netherlands. She left her stopover site in the Coto Doñana, southern Spain, on 14 July and reached Morocco's southern border next day. Like many Black-tailed Godwits, she also paused in north Senegal's wetlands, where she remained for three days. On 27 July she alighted in Yawri Bay, on Sierra Leone's west coast. Yawri Bay forms part of the Important Bird Area and Ramsar site 'Sierra Leone River Estuary', a wetland of *c*.295,000 ha that is of international importance for Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Common Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea* and Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*, and is also important for terns, including Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*.

Source: Vogelbescherming Nederland press release, 31 July 2013

Black-tailed Godwit / Barge à queue noire *Limosa limosa* (John Caddick)

Endless flight...?

It has often been suggested that Common Swifts *Apus apus* spend most of their entire lives airborne, but proof of such a claim has been lacking. Recently, however, a group of Swiss researchers has presented unequivocal evidence that an individual Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* can remain aloft throughout the non-breeding period for in excess of 200 days. To date, such long-lasting locomotive activities had been reported only for birds at sea. Six swifts at a breeding site in Switzerland were fitted with tags logging light for information on their whereabouts; after their return to the same site in the following spring, three of the six were recaptured and the stored data were used to reconstruct their non-breeding movements and activity patterns over a period of at least seven months. Because the nest sites are inside a building (in the dark), nest visits during daytime were easily detectable by the abrupt change in the light level. When the birds are exposed to natural light conditions, light levels change gradually during twilight. The light-based geolocation confirmed the supposed winter quarters as being in West Africa and, in spring, after crossing the Sahara, the birds spent some time in North Africa and southern Spain, but most exciting was the confirmation that the birds really had spent the entire period away from the breeding grounds without landing!

Source: Nature Communications *4, 2554, DOI: 10.1038/ncomms3554*

The ongoing plight of the African Elephant...

The latest analysis of poaching data estimates that in 2012 *c*.15,000 African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* were illegally killed at 42 sites across 27 African countries, which could translate to an estimated 22,000 elephants illegally killed continent-wide in 2012, a slight reduction on the estimated 25,000 elephants poached in 2011 (see also *Bull. ABC* 20: 139–140). "With an estimated 22,000 African Elephants illegally killed in 2012, we continue to face a critical situation. Current elephant poaching in Africa remains far too high, and could soon lead to local extinctions if the present killing rates continue. The situation is particularly acute in Central Africa—where the estimated poaching rate is twice the continental average" said John E. Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General. The IUCN / SSC African Elephant Specialist Group estimates the entire population to be *c*.500,000 animals. High poaching levels mean that even the large populations in southern and East Africa are at risk unless the trend is reversed. The poaching levels are mirrored by the ivory trafficking figures compiled via the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) database, which suggest that illicit trade in ivory rose in 2011 to the highest levels in at least 16 years, persisted at unacceptably elevated levels through 2012 and that even higher levels of illicit trade may have been reached in 2013. Although incomplete, the raw data for large-scale ivory seizures in 2013 (involving at least 500 kg in a single transaction) already represent the greatest quantity of ivory confiscated over the last 25 years for this type of seizure. In response, key states along the illegal ivory value chain have recently committed to urgent measures to halt the illegal trade and secure elephant populations across Africa. The agreement was reached at the African Elephant Summit convened by the government of Botswana and IUCN, which was the first-ever meeting focused on the dynamics of the entire ivory value chain. The measures were agreed by range states including Gabon, Kenya, Niger and Zambia, ivory transit states Vietnam, Philippines and Malaysia and ivory destination states, including China and Thailand. One of the 14 measures the delegates committed to involves classifying wildlife trafficking as a 'serious crime'. This will unlock international law enforcement cooperation provided under the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, including mutual legal assistance, asset seizure and forfeiture, extradition and other tools to hold criminals accountable for wildlife crime. Other measures agreed include engaging communities living with elephants in their conservation, strengthening national laws to secure maximum wildlife crime sentences, mobilising financial and technical resources to combat wildlife crime, and reducing demand for illegal ivory.

Sources: IUCN SSC Species e-bulletin November 2013; IUCN SSC Species e-bulletin December 2013

...Africa's vultures

The recent death of up to 600 vultures that had fed on a poisoned elephant carcass near Namibia's Bwabwata National Park in July 2013 has confirmed that the indiscriminate use of poison is one of the major causes of the ongoing decline in vulture populations across most of Africa. This is particularly evident in West Africa where an average decline of 42% in vulture numbers has been recorded over the past 30 years, with Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli* declining by up to 85%. It is now common practice for poachers killing elephants and other large mammals to lace carcasses with poison to kill vultures. Vultures congregating at these carcasses in large numbers are often used by law enforcement officials in many parts of Africa as an indication of poaching activity and as a way to pursue the offenders. "By poisoning carcasses, poachers hope to eradicate vultures from an area where they operate and thereby escape detection," said Leo Niskanen Technical Coordinator, IUCN Conservation Areas and Species Diversity Programme. "The fact that incidents such as these can be linked to the rampant poaching of elephants in Africa is a serious concern. Similar incidents have been recorded in Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia in recent years".

Rüppell's Vulture / Vautour de Rüppell *Gyps rueppelli* (Werner Suter)

Most of the birds killed in the recent incident were White-backed Vultures *G. africanus*, currently listed as Endangered by IUCN / BirdLife International. Two dead tagged birds recovered from the incident were found 1,000 km away, graphically illustrating the possible range of impact on vulture populations. The use of poison also negatively affects other large raptors such as Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* and Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*, as well as lions, hyenas and jackals. Africa's vulture populations cannot sustain such losses and the current decline may have serious ecological and human health consequences in the longer term. Many countries in Africa lack appropriate legislation and other measures to control or prevent the indiscriminate use of poisons. Penalties in cases where those responsible are apprehended are often minimal and do not act as a deterrent to the perpetrators. "We believe that crimes of this nature should have the same priority and be subject to similar penalties as those ascribed to incidents of poaching of the mega-fauna such as elephant and rhino," said André Botha, Co-chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Vulture Specialist Group.

Sources: IUCN SSC Species e-bulletin August 2013; World Birdwatch *35(4), p. 2*

...and Palearctic migrants wintering in Africa

Compelling evidence now exists that Afro-Palearctic migrant bird populations have declined in Europe in recent decades, often to a greater degree than resident or short-distance migrants. There appear to have been two phases of decline. The first in the 1960s–1970s, and in some cases into the early 1980s, largely affected species wintering predominantly in the arid Sahelian zone, and the second since the 1980s has mostly affected species wintering in the humid tropics and Guinea forest zone. Potential drivers are diverse and spread across and interact within the migratory cycle. Knowledge of declining species is generally better for the breeding than the non-breeding parts of their life cycles, but there are significant gaps in both for many species. On the breeding grounds, degradation of breeding habitats is affecting the demography of the largest number of species, particularly in agricultural systems and woodland. In the non-breeding areas, the interacting factors of anthropogenic habitat degradation and climatic conditions, particularly drought in the Sahel zone, appear to be the most important factors. Based on a synthesis of existing information, Juliet Vickery and her co-authors have suggested four priorities for further research: (1) use of new and emerging tracking technologies to identify migratory pathways and strategies, understand migratory connectivity and enable field research to be targeted more effectively; (2) undertake detailed field studies in sub-Saharan Africa and at staging sites, where understanding of distribution patterns, habitat use and foraging ecology is particularly poor; (3) make better use of the wealth of data from the European breeding grounds to explore spatial and temporal patterns in demographic parameters and relate these to migratory pathways and large-scale patterns of habitat change and climatic factors; and (4) make better use of remote sensing to improve our understanding of how and where land cover is changing across these extensive areas and how this impacts Afro-Palearctic migrants. Such research is necessary to inform and underpin a flyway approach to conservation, evaluating drivers across the migratory cycle and combining this with an understanding of land

Wryneck / Torcol fourmilier *Jynx torquilla* (Georges Olioso)

management practices that integrate the needs of birds and people in these areas.

Source: Ibis *156, pp. 1–22*

Wrynecks winter further north than thought

Seven Eurasian Wrynecks *Jynx torquilla* equipped with geolocators during the breeding season of 2011, six in Switzerland and one in eastern Germany, and recaptured in 2012, spent the winter in the Iberian Peninsula (five) or Morocco (two), although Central European populations of the species are usually assumed to winter in Sahelian Africa.

Source: Ibis *155, pp. 886–890*

North Africa

New species for Egypt and the Western Palearctic

Two male Yellow Bitterns *Ixobrychus sinensis* were trapped in 2012 in mangroves at Hamata, on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea, the first record for the Western Palearctic. This discovery led to follow-up work and to the finding in the same area of at least three nests in 2013; Yellow Bittern breeds commonly throughout southern Asia but the nearest known breeding areas to Egypt are in coastal Oman and Seychelles.

Source: Limicola *26, pp. 253–278*

Yellow Bittern / Blongios de Chine *Ixobrychus sinensis* (Werner Suter)

Black-necked Grebe / Grèbe à cou noir *Podiceps ruficollis* (Mark Anderson)

Black-necked Grebe population in Morocco on the increase...

A five-year study of the Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* population on three Middle Atlas wetlands in Morocco—Aguelmam Afennourir, Dayet Aoua and Dayet Ifrah—showed a spectacular increase from 372 pairs in 2009 to 1,100 in 2013—an annual increase of 62%. Several other waterbird species breeding in Morocco are also increasing, including Little *Tachybaptus ruficollis* and Great Crested Grebes *Podiceps major*. A ten-year survey at the well-known Ramsar site of Sidi Boughaba, revealed an increase in breeding populations of Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*, Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*, Ferruginous Duck *A. nyroca* and White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*. This positive trend appears to be mirrored over most of the country's wetlands.

Source: Wetlands Ecol. Manag. *21, DOI 10.1007/s11273-013-9321-7*

...and Northern Bald Ibis enjoys record year

The 2013 breeding season of Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* in Morocco appears to have been the second most successful on record, with 148 young fledging, thereby bring the total population in country to 443 birds. The 60 pairs in the Tamri colony fledged 71 young (in contrast to the complete failure there in 2012), with the other 77 being produced by 53 pairs in Souss Massa National Park (an additional six pairs there failed to nest, as a result of continued disturbance by a Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* overflying their breeding ledges).

Source: World Birdwatch *35(4), p. 5*

Common Quail found breeding in Libya

In May 2008, breeding of Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* was established in agricultural areas at Sarir, in the Libyan Desert, where 4–6 birds were observed. In March 2009, calling birds were recorded at three sites in cereal and fodder croplands in Fezzan, south-west Libya, and a quail egg was found. Common Quail had previously only been reported on passage and in winter, but the recent records prove that it breeds in the country and suggest that the species is probably a regular and not uncommon breeder. The population presumably increased with the establishment of radial oases in the 1970s. Breeding in desert oases in neighbouring Tunisia and Algeria has been known for some time.

Source: Alauda *81, pp. 229–231*

Atlantic Ocean islands

Macaronesian Bulwer's Petrels satellite tracked

To record their foraging and post-breeding movements, five Bulwer's Petrels *Bulweria bulwerii* were fitted with satellite transmitters in August 2010 on Alegranza, an islet off Lanzarote, in the Canary Islands, where >150 pairs breed. On average, foraging trips lasted 5.6 days, whilst the distance covered ranged from 1,168 to 1,364 km, and foraging areas were located over the continental slope and adjacent pelagic waters, up to 350 km from the colony. In the post-breeding period, the birds dispersed south-westwards to the tropical central Atlantic, >2,000 km from the colony. The speed of travel away from the colony, initially quick, slowed down shortly before the signal was lost, indicating that their wintering areas may have been reached. This is in agreement with the hypothesis that the Macaronesian population of Bulwer's Petrel might winter in the central Atlantic between 20°N and 10°S.

Source: Bird Study *60, pp. 270–274*

A new breeding locality of Madeiran Storm-petrel

Santa Luzia is the smallest island in the Cape Verde archipelago and currently uninhabited. Unlike the remainder of the islands, which are generally rather important for their breeding seabirds, none is known to nest on Santa Luzia. However, a recent survey has uncovered reasonably strong evidence of the presence of Madeiran Storm-petrels *Oceanodroma castro* on the island's north-west coast, which is of significance given that the Cape Verde population numbers just *c.*1,000 pairs and has been treated at specific level by some recent authorities as Cape Verde Storm-petrel *O. jabejabe.*

Source: Zool. Caboverdiana *4(1), pp. 17–20*

Mice problem on Gough being addressed

Since the discovery that introduced House Mice *Mus musculus* were killing large numbers of chicks of Tristan Albatrosses *Diomedea (exulans) dabbenena* and other birds on Gough Island (*Bull. ABC* 17: 155 & 20: 144) there have been calls to address the problem. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in the UK) worked with Tristan's Conservation Department to bring two New Zealand eradication specialists to Gough in September 2013. One of the specialists had been involved with the apparently successful eradication of mice, rats and rabbits on Australia's subantarctic Macquarie Island in 2011, using aerial application of poisoned bait. On Gough, non-toxic bait was dropped on coastal cliffs in a try-out. The results were encouraging and a plan has been devised for the eradication, which could take place as early as 2015. All that is needed are funds to finance 180 tons of poisoned bait and the logistics to deliver it safely.

Source: African Birdlife *2(1), pp. 10–12*

West and Central Africa

High concentrations of Wilson's Storm-petrels found off Mauritania

In July 2005, a research expedition to the Mauritanian upwelling zone *c.*50–150 km west of Cape Timiris, an important feeding area for resident and migratory seabirds, enabled the seabird assemblage in midsummer to be assessed for the first time and discovered an unprecedented concentration of Wilson's Storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus.* Flocks of up to 600 birds were encountered at the boundary between warm surface waters and cooler upwellings. These flocks formed an aggregation of at least 5,000 birds. Previous pelagic trips to the region in winter and spring had revealed important concentrations of species such as Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*, Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*, Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*, Long-tailed Skua *S. longicaudus*, Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*, Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and Black Tern *Chlidonias niger.* In July 2005, the commonest seabird species in the shelf-edge 'mixing zone' was Wilson's Storm-petrel, but several thousand Black Terns (roughly 80–90% of which were first-summer birds) and hundreds of Cape Verde Shearwaters *Calonectris edwardsii*, Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus* and Common Terns were also recorded, most of them, but not the storm-petrels, associating with fishing vessels or moving between vessels.

Source: Seabird *25, pp. 47–53*

Wilson's Storm-petrel / Océanite de Wilson *Oceanites oceanicus* (Adam Riley)

Greyish Eagle Owl / Grand-duc du Sahel *Bubo (africanus) cinerascens* (Adam Riley)

Occurrence of Greyish Eagle Owl in Mauritania confirmed...

Although Greyish Eagle Owl *Bubo (africanus) cinerascens* had been claimed for southern Mauritania, Isenmann *et al.* (2010. *Birds of Mauritania*), sensibly, did not retain it in their list of species confirmed for the country because the species had been reported by a single observer without supporting details. This has prompted three other observers to document records at three different sites in the south of the country, up to *c.*18°40'N. The occurrence of Greyish Eagle Owl in the country is thus confirmed.

Source: Malimbus *35, pp. 147–148*

...but African Palm Swift might not occur in northern Mauritania

A single report of African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* in northern Mauritania, in July 1999, has been regarded as the only viable record for the Western Palearctic, based primarily on the observer's familiarity with the species further south in the country (see *Bull. ABC* 17: 153). However, the lack of physical documentation in support of the record, and absence of other reports from localities in the northern half of the country, have led to the suggestion that the species should, after all, be omitted from the list of birds reliably recorded in the Western Palearctic region.

Source: Dutch Birding *35, pp. 249–250*

Lesser Flamingos finally breed successfully in West Africa

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* has just one breeding colony in West Africa, at Aftout es Saheli, in south-west Mauritania. Several attempts at breeding have been documented since the late 19th century, but none was successful until very recently. In 2011, most threats were identified and averted, and consequently nearly 5,000 Lesser and just over 10,000 Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* were recorded incubating and approximately 10,000 chicks fledged. Deterring and trapping natural predators (mostly jackals and warthogs) and preventing the activities of poachers were the main interventions required, but even so nearly 5,000 juveniles were lost.

Source: Bird Conserv. Intern. *23, pp. 426–436*

First Pacific Golden Plover for Senegal documented

The first record of Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* for Senegal has been documented. The bird, which was in near-complete breeding plumage, was photographed on the 'Île aux oiseaux' in Saloum Delta National Park on 10 May 2012. There are just two previous definite records in West Africa, both of singles in coastal Côte d'Ivoire, in December 1987 and October–November 1989, although 'golden plovers' claimed as probable *P. fulva* have been reported from Ghana, Togo and Nigeria.

Source: Malimbus *35, pp. 139–140*

Aberrant Aquatic Warbler trapped in Senegal

In February 2011, an aberrant pale-coloured Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* was trapped in Djoudj National Park, north-west Senegal. The bird had been ringed in France in August 2009 and was thus almost two years old. This is the only aberrantly coloured Aquatic Warbler among the 7,083 individuals ringed in France in 1982–2011. The bird is presumed to have originated from the breeding population in western Poland. The Djoudj and the Inner Niger Delta in Mali are now known to be two major wintering areas of this globally threatened species, which appears to exhibit high site fidelity.

Source: Malimbus *35, pp. 142–146*

Birds of the Tristao and Alcatraz islands, Guinea, surveyed

An ornithological survey of the coastal archipelago of the Tristao and Alcatraz islands, Boké Préfecture, north-west Guinea, in February–May 2007, with additional records made in November–December 2012, produced a list of 236 species, amongst which one was new to Guinea: Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro*, of which *c.*20 individuals were observed at sea on 26 April. A White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* was photographed in riparian forest—this is only the second site in the country where the species has been recorded, the first being Haut Niger National Park. Unexpected and highly remarkable was the observation of two Grey-throated Rails *Canirallus oculeus*, the westernmost record to date, fortunately proved by a good photograph. The archipelago is especially important for >20,000 wintering Palearctic waders, among them *c.*1% of the global population of Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*. The rocky island of Alcatraz also harbours West Africa's largest colony of Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* (2,200 pairs) and a nearby sandy islet supports 3,700 pairs of Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus*.

Source: Malimbus *35, pp. 93–130*

West Africa's lions face extinction

Lioness / Lionne *Panthera leo* (Adam Riley)

The Lion *Panthera leo* population in West Africa has undergone a catastrophic collapse in recent years and only *c.*400 animals survive, representing 250 mature individuals. This is the alarming conclusion of a recently published study conducted by Philipp Henschel and co-workers. Surveys were conducted in 13 large protected areas (of >500 km^2) and evidence of lion presence/absence was compiled in a further eight. In 2005 lions were still present in 12 protected areas. Now their presence was confirmed in just four, of which three harbour <50 individuals. In these three areas, which are isolated from each other—Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal), Kainji Lake National Park and Yankari Game Reserve (Nigeria)—lions are expected to become extinct soon. The only large population is in the W-Arly-Pendjari complex, at the borders of Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, with an estimated 356 individuals. West African lions once ranged continuously from Senegal to Nigeria, but their present range is estimated at just 1.1% (or 49,000 km^2) of what it once was. In the rest of Africa the lion's range has also severely contracted, but not as dramatically as in West Africa. All but a few of the areas surveyed were in fact paper parks, with no management budgets or patrol staff, and had already lost all of their other large mammals. Black Rhino *Diceros bicornis* was officially declared extinct in West Africa in 2013; Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*, Wild Dog *Lycaon pictus* and Giant Eland *Tragelaphus derbianus* are imminently threatened with the same fate. Molecular and morphological data show that West and Central African lions are genetically distinct from other extant African populations and are closely related to the extinct

'Barbary Lions' that once occurred in North Africa, as well as to the last Asiatic lions surviving in India. The authors of the study therefore recommend to recognise the West African lions as a separate subspecies to highlight their potentially unique conservation value. Lion declines are mainly due to large-scale habitat destruction, prey base depletion through unsustainable poaching, and the retaliatory killing of lions due to perceived or real human–lion conflict. Today, fewer than 35,000 lions remain in Africa, as opposed to 100,000 in the 1960s.

Source: PLoS ONE *9: e83500. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0083500*

Birds from the Lagoa Carumbo area, north-east Angola

During five days of field work, in April–May 2011, Michael Mills recorded 175 bird species in the Lagoa Carumbo area, an ornithologically poorly known Important Bird Area (IBA) in Lunda Norte province, north-east Angola. These included many new provincial records, range extensions and rare species, as well as two species new to the country: South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera* and Red-tailed Leaflove *Phyllastrephus scandens* (documented in *Bull. ABC* 20: 200–203). The total number of species confirmed for the area, which lies at the interface of the Guinea-Congo Forests and Zambezian biomes, now stands at 196, among them 15 species restricted to the latter biome. Lagoa Carumbo thus harbours the highest number of Zambezian biome species known for any IBA in Angola.

Source: Malimbus *35, pp. 77–92*

East Africa

'Killer' power line to go

Since its construction in the 1950s a 31 km-long power line near Port Sudan has been estimated to have killed perhaps thousands of Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* alone. In March 2013 a workshop was convened by the Sudanese Wildlife Society to discuss ways of mitigating its effects, given that Egyptian Vulture is now considered globally threatened. Surprisingly, the director of the responsible electricity company promised to build a parallel and replacement power line replete with special conductors, and to remove the original line as soon as the new one is completed.

Source: World Birdwatch *35(4), p. 11*

Northern Bald Ibis wintering ecology in Ethiopia

The relict eastern population of Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* discovered in Syria in 2002 has been declining ever since. It is known to winter on the central Ethiopian plateau and a new study by Gianlucca Serra and others has assessed the conditions the birds meet when they are there. The area is agro-pastural land inhabited by a settled community. The birds' core area and extended range areas were *c.*20 and 60 times, respectively, smaller than the equivalent in the breeding season. They preferred to forage in pasture and recently cut hayfields, and avoided tall grass, uncut fields and cultivation. Human disturbance was minimal. The main threat is probably the potential conversion of pasture to croplands and the use of fertilisers and pesticides.

Source: Bird Conserv. Intern. *23, pp. 399–413*

Oldest wild Lesser Flamingo found in Kenya

A Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* ringed as a chick at Lake Magadi, Kenya, in 1962 was found dead at Lake Bogoria in February 2013. The bird lived for 50 years and almost four months, making it the oldest-known wild flamingo. In 1961–62 the soda mudflats of Natron were underwater making the site unsuitable for nesting, thus that year breeding temporarily shifted to Lake Magadi. Of the 8,000 flamingos ringed, over ten recoveries have been made since 1962, notably one in West Africa, 6,197 km from Lake Magadi.

Source: www.birdlife.org/africa/news/pink-ring-safari-ends-lake-bogoria

Farmland birds receive more attention

Farmland birds have been the subject of a large amount of research in Europe but studies in Africa have concentrated mainly on natural habitats. However, two new studies on what is important in the farmland environment in eastern Africa have just been published. The first by P. Kariuki Ndang'ang'a *et al.* examined the effects of vegetation composition and structure on birds in the highland agricultural landscape of Nyandarua in Kenya. Bird diversity increased with increasing density of woody plant species and vegetation structural variability. Increasing structural heterogeneity (particularly closed-canopy cover and increasing fallow and cultivation of grassland / pasture cover) were the most important influences on overall diversity and, as expected, most of the species that were studied exhibited some benefit from structurally rich landscapes. The second study by David Douglas and colleagues looked specifically at the importance of native trees for forest birds in central Ugandan farmland. Neither total bird species nor richness of non-forest dependent species was related to any measure of tree cover, but richness of forest-dependent species was positively related to numbers of native trees (especially large ones), and native tree variables typically had a greater effect than those for exotic tree species. The latter contributed little even though they comprised *c.*40% of trees available.

Sources: Ostrich *84, pp. 171–179*; Anim. Conserv. *online*

Southern Africa

New study reveals lack of genetic diversity in Black Harrier

Black Harrier *Circus maurus* is one of the three rarest endemic bird species in South Africa and certainly the rarest endemic raptor. The global population is currently estimated at fewer than 1,000 mature individuals, mostly in Northern and Western Cape provinces. Recent satellite-

Black Harrier / Busard maure *Circus maurus* (Mark Anderson)

tagging work has revealed that birds in Western Cape move east post-breeding and may spend the summer in Lesotho and Free State (www.blackharrierspace.blogspot.com/), suggesting that the Eastern Cape and Free State population is not independent of that in the Western Cape, and that the world population may be smaller than assumed. A recent genetic study has confirmed that there appears to be no genetic variation in the species across most of its breeding range; two hypotheses exist to explain this finding, one being that the lack of diversity is not due to selection but rather to drift and fixation of alleles at small population sizes, as might be expected to occur during a bottleneck. If confirmed, this might provide even more worrying news for this globally threatened (Vulnerable) bird.

Source: Ibis *156, pp. 227–230*

Avifauna of Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, Malaŵi

The meticulous work of Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire and Bob Dowsett has left Malaŵi among the best-known countries in Africa in terms of bird distributions, with a fine atlas-like avifauna (*The Birds of Malawi*, 2006). Nevertheless, gaps in coverage remain to be filled. One such was Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, which was surveyed by Josh Engel and colleagues over 12 days in October 2009, prior to the wet season, and two days in November 2009, after the first rains, in the process of which they documented six new species for the reserve—Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*, African Pitta *Pitta angolensis*, African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*, African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*, Marsh Tchagra *Bocagia minuta* (=*Tchagra minutus*) and African Yellow Warbler *Iduna* (=*Chloropeta*) *natalensis*—and recorded 56 new quadrat records, filling in distributional gaps in the country's bird atlas.

Source: J. East Afr. Nat. Hist. *101, pp. 223–240*

Augur Buzzard / Buse augure *Buteo augur* (Ken Burton)

Augur Buzzard recorded in South Africa

On 5 June 2013, an adult Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* was photographed in Richtersveld sandplain, *c.*30 km south of the Namibian border, Northern Cape, South Africa. This appears to be the first record for South Africa of this species, which has an isolated population in south-west Angola and north-west and central Namibia. Augur Buzzard is normally resident, with occasional nomadism linked to prey availability.

Source: African Birdlife *1(6), p. 12*

Taxonomic proposals

More on Macaronesian petrel relationships

The north-east Atlantic archipelagos of the Azores, Madeira, the Canaries and Cape Verdes have been host to complex patterns of colonisation and differentiation in many groups of birds including gadfly petrels (*Pterodroma*). Despite considerable interest, the taxonomic status of the three gadfly petrel taxa breeding in Macaronesia (all of which were long treated as subspecies of the Southern Ocean Soft-plumaged Petrel *P. mollis*) remains a 'hot potato', with various authors advocating the recognition of three, two or just one species and prevailing wisdom over the past two decades generally favouring two species-level taxa, Zino's Petrel *P. madeira* and Fea's Petrel *P. feae* (the latter also comprising *P. f. deserta*, which some more recent authors have suggested also merits specific status). These birds have already been the subject of genetic studies with only one mtDNA gene and relatively modest sample sizes. The most recent investigation, by a multi-author team, sampled a total of five genes (two mitochondrial genes and three nuclear introns) from the petrel populations breeding on the Madeira and Cape Verde archipelagos. Although the team was able to confirm complete lineage sorting in mtDNA, analyses of nuclear material failed to reveal any population structuring and Isolation with Migration analysis revealed the absence of gene flow during the differentiation process of these populations, which apparently diverged in the late Pleistocene, within the last 150,000 years, i.e. ten times more recently than previous estimates based solely on a single mtDNA gene. The other contrast with previous results was the suggestion that the Madeira petrel population is ancestral rather than that on the Cape Verdes.

Source: Mol. Ecol. *22, pp. 495–507*

Cyrenaic Partridge, a new North African endemic species?

A short paper by Silvio Spanò and colleagues has suggested that the *barbata* subspecies of Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*, which is endemic to north-east Libya and north-west Egypt, is sufficiently different in morphology and mtDNA to be treated either as an Evolutionary Significant Unit, or a separate species. The level of genetic differentiation uncovered by the authors, 0.6%, is reasonably significant at this locus, as other wider studies of *Alectoris* partridges have found generally rather small differences in mtDNA in this genus.

Source: Avocetta *37, pp. 145–148*

Relationships among hornbills established

Although molecular studies of the hornbills (Bucerotidae) have been conducted in the past, these were based solely on mtDNA and a limited sampling of species diversity. Juan-Carlos Gonzalez and co-workers have now reconstructed relationships among all extant hornbill species and established a comprehensive molecular phylogeny for this distinct family. The resulting phylogenetic trees closely match vocal variation across the family but conflict with current taxonomic treatments. Concerning African species, they reveal that the genus *Tockus* as currently defined is divided into two major groups, each representing different vocal types ('whistlers' and 'cluckers'). This supports the splitting of *Tockus* into two genera, with the name *Lophoceros* being revived for the 'whistlers'. The latter include seven species: Bradfield's *Lophoceros bradfieldi*, Crowned *L. alboterminatus*, African Pied *L. fasciatus*, Hemprich's *L. hemprichii*, African Grey *L. nasutus*, Red-billed Dwarf *L. camurus* and Pale-billed Hornbills *L. pallidirostris*. Additionally, nuclear and mtDNA trees provide some support for the splitting of Red-billed Hornbill *T. erythrorhynchus* into several species, by confirming substantial genetic divergence among lineages in this complex.The most important and quite unexpected find, however, was that Black Dwarf Hornbill '*Tockus*' *hartlaubi* does not belong to *Tockus* at all but is sister to White-crested Hornbill *Tropicranus albocristatus*. This placement actually makes sense on the basis of phenotype, as both species share several diagnostic characters, such as crest structure and a graduated tail. If *T. hartlaubi* is merged with *Tropicranus*, the latter name becomes a junior synonym of *Horizocerus*, which thus has priority over the characteristic and well-established *Tropicranus*. The species pair proposed as congeners should therefore be named *Horizocerus hartlaubi* and *H. albocristatus*.

Sources: Mol. Phyl. & Evol. *67, pp. 468–483*; *68, p. 715*

Madagascar Lark / Alouette malgache *Mirafra hova* (Keith Valentine)

A new classification of larks

Per Alström and others have undertaken a major analysis of relationships within the larks (Alaudidae). The family is cosmopolitan but reaches its greatest diversity in Africa. Based on the results of two mtDNA and three nuclear loci, they propose a revised generic classification, some of which supports existing relationships and others not. It was also clear that larks are extraordinarily adaptable morphologically with numerous examples of parallel evolution and also some cases where an unrelated species has come to look like those of another genus, for example Madagascar Lark *Mirafra hova* seems actually to be closer to *Eremopterix*, although morphologically very unlike the latter genus. Some other relationships thought to be close from a morphological standpoint turn out not to be and vice versa. Indeed, as a whole larks show more disagreements between morphological taxonomy and phylogenetic relationships (from DNA) than almost any other family.

Source: Mol. Phyl. & Evol. *69, pp. 1043–1056*

Exit Long-tailed and Kimberley Pipits

In 1996, the late Richard Liversidge described a new species of pipit from Kimberley, Northern Cape, South Africa, and named it Long-tailed Pipit *Anthus longicaudatus*. Amazingly he, with evolutionary biologist and geneticist Gary Voelcker, described a second new pipit from the same Kimberley sports fields in 2002, which was named Kimberley Pipit *A. pseudosimilis*. Since then, Kimberley has seen birders from all over the world trying to get to grips with the pipits present in winter. This proved to be much harder than expected and over the next decade scepticism gradually grew. However, no reassessment of the new species was conducted. In a recent article Faansie Peacock does just that. Having examined a long series of skins, including a syntype and two paratypes of Long-tailed Pipit and the holotype of Kimberley Pipit, Peacock and his collegue Greg Davies came to a sobering conclusion. The Long-tailed Pipit material proved identical to Buffy Pipit *A. vaalensis*, except one female paratype, which was a Long-billed Pipit *A. similis*, whilst the Kimberley Pipit holotype was in fact an African (= Grassland) Pipit *A. cinnamomeus*. Five of the other specimens identified as Kimberley Pipits were Long-billed Pipits, whilst one was a Mountain Pipit *A. hoeschi*. Liversidge maintained that Long-tailed Pipit exhibited distinctive behaviour, vocalisations and habitat preferences, but this is also convincingly refuted by Peacock. Based on the limited evidence available, it was hypothesised that Long-tailed Pipit was a non-breeding winter visitor from breeding grounds in the central African tropics, but Peacock questions this highly unusual strategy and asks why a subtropical breeding bird would winter in the dry, dusty and bitterly cold plains around Kimberley. Results of genetic analyses presented by Voelcker unsurprisingly revealed Long-tailed to be sister to Buffy Pipit, whilst Malindi Pipit *A. malindae*, an East African endemic, was unexpectedly identified as the closest relative of Kimberley Pipit. Subsequent sampling added considerably to the confusion, as further Kimberley Pipit specimens were found to genetically overlap with Plain-backed and African Pipits. This, together with other odd patterns in Voelcker's phylogenetic tree, actually suggested that the specimens were originally misidentified. Based on their thorough examination, Peacock and Davies reject the validity of both Long-tailed and Kimberley Pipits.

Source: African Birdlife *2(1), pp. 61–66*

Mourning Wheatear: an ongoing taxonomic headache

The Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* complex has been investigated from a genetic standpoint previously, but studies have not covered all of the various recognised forms. Normally the complex is split into a north-east African group (*lugubris*), *lugentoides* in southern Arabia and *lugens* in North Africa and the Middle East (in each case there may be more than one subspecies). Now, Manuel Schweizer and others have analysed the entire complex and found that the group is certainly polyphyletic and should be split into at least three species corresponding broadly to these three groups. *O. lugens* (*sensu stricto*) is certainly the most disparate being more closely related to the Red-tailed *O. chrysopygia* / Kurdish Wheatear *O. xanthoprymna* complex, although the other two groups are each other's closest relatives. Overall, the results of this and previous genetic studies indicate that morphology appears to be a particularly poor predictor of relationships within *Oenanthe.*

Source: Mol. Phyl. & Evol. *69, pp. 450–461*

Two sympatric lineages of Common Raven on the eastern Canaries

Recently, based on genetic analysis, a distinct lineage of Common Raven *Corvus corax* on the Canary Islands has been described and assigned to *C. c. tingitanus.* However, all sampled birds originated from just one island (Fuerteventura). Additional samples from other islands in the archipelago, as well as from other populations in North Africa and Europe, have now been used to confirm the occurrence of a distinct lineage on the two easternmost islands of the Canaries, whereas most specimens on other islands are closely related to birds from Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean islands. However, on at least one of these islands, the researchers found that the Canarian and Holarctic lineages coexist. The distribution patterns of the genetically distinct Canarian lineage match the subspecies *C. c. jordansi,* which was previously described from morphological characters such as small size and brownish feathering. The authors of the study recommend that the distinct mtDNA lineage (*C. c. tingitanus*) and the morphological subspecies *C. c. jordansi* from the eastern Canary Islands should be considered as referring to the same population and that the latter name has priority.

Source: J. Ornithol. *155, pp. 243–251*

Genetic variation in Trumpeter Finch populations

A recent study has used nuclear and mitochondrial markers to investigate the phylogeography and to estimate chronology of colonisation events in Trumpeter Finches *Bucanetes githagineus.* Microsatellite and mitochondrial data showed the clearest differentiation as being between Maghreb and Canary Islands and between Maghreb and Western Sahara populations, and mtDNA alone suggests differentiation between different Maghreb populations, among Maghreb and Near East populations, between the Iberian Peninsula and Canary Islands, and between the Western Sahara and Maghreb. The species appears to have colonised North Africa during the humid Marine Isotope Stage 5 period of the Sahara region 125,000 years ago, and that its current range reflects this finch's responses to Pleistocene climatic changes, which would have led to alternate expansions and contractions of its range.

Source: Mol. Ecol. *doi: 10.1111/ mec.12588*

Internet resources

HBW Alive

HBW Alive represents an online comprehensive reference resource for all the birds of the world and comprises the contents of the acclaimed 17-volume *Handbook of the Birds of the World*—the first of which appeared in 1992 and the last in June 2013. Now, the cumulative total of 13,367 pages (the product of 277 authors), 1,030 plates (by 33 artists), 20,617 figures, 10,200 maps and *c.*100,000 bibliographical references are available online via subscription, and all of the contents, including texts, maps and artwork, are constantly updated via a combination of professional editors and moderated user participation. Links to videos, photographs and sound-recordings are used to complement the texts and HBW Alive also provides many other features, including the capacity to make various lists, with geographical filtering and personal notes. There are two membership categories (basic, which costs €29.95 / year, and supporting, at €44.95 / year, which provides additional features), both of which also require a one-off registration fee of €20.

Sources: http://www.hbw.com/; https:// www.youtube.com/user/HBWAlive

Africa's avian cheats get their own website

Cuckoos, cuckoo finches, honeyguides, indigobirds and other brood parasitic birds exploit the care of other species to raise their young. In doing so they make ideal study systems for field research on coevolution—the process by which two or more species affect each other's evolution. Claire Spottiswoode and her colleagues have been studying brood parasites in the field at Choma, Zambia, since 2006. The researchers form part of the Behavioural Ecology Group in the University of Cambridge's Department of Zoology, and now have their own website dedicated to their research, where you can follow their work and download some of their publications.

Source: http://www2.zoo.cam.ac.uk/ africancuckoos/home.html

Raptors in northern Cameroon, December 2005–December 2010

Ralph Buij[a,b] *& Barbara M. Croes*[a]

Rapaces au Cameroun du nord, décembre 2005–décembre 2010. Les rapaces des principaux habitats du Cameroun du nord ont été recensés entre décembre 2005 et décembre 2010. Une analyse est présentée de 60 espèces de rapaces. Parmi celles-ci, six espèces n'avaient pas été documentées au nord du Cameroun avant 2005. Des informations sont présentées sur plusieurs espèces afrotropicales régionalement rares ou peu étudiées telles que le Messager sagittaire *Sagittarius serpentarius*, le Baza coucou *Aviceda cuculoides*, le Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini*, l'Aigle d'Ayres *Hieraaetus ayresii*, l'Épervier de Hartlaub *Accipiter erythropus*, l'Épervier de l'Ovampo *A. ovampensis* et le Faucon de Cuvier *Falco cuvierii*. Des données sont également fournies sur le comportement, le cycle de reproduction, la mue, le succès de reproduction, l'alimentation, les modalités et le succès de chasse, la migration saisonnière, et la dispersion de nombreuses espèces, ainsi que des observations de 12 migrateurs paléarctiques peu observés. L'Aigle des steppes *Aquila nipalensis*, l'Aigle impérial *A. heliaca*, la Buse féroce *Buteo rufinus* et le Faucon de Barbarie *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* semblent être plus courants dans la zone d'inondation de la région de l'Extrême-Nord que précédemment rapporté. En conclusion les menaces qui pèsent sur cette riche communauté de rapaces sont examinées.

Summary. We conducted raptor surveys in all major habitats of northern Cameroon between December 2005 and December 2010. Details for 60 raptor species are presented. Of these, six had not been documented in northern Cameroon prior to our survey. Information is presented on regionally rare or little-studied Afrotropical raptors such as Secretary-bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*, African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*, Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Ayres's Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*, Red-thighed Sparrowhawk *Accipiter erythropus*, Ovambo Sparrowhawk *A. ovampensis* and African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*. Details are given on the behaviour, breeding cycle, moult, reproductive success, diet, foraging, prey capture success, seasonal migration and dispersal of many species. Records further include details for 12 infrequently observed Palearctic migrants; Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*, Eastern Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca*, Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* and Barbary Falcon *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* appear to be commoner visitors to the inundation zone in the Far North Region than previously reported. We conclude with a discussion of threats to this rich raptor community.

Information on raptor abundance, movements and breeding in many western African countries is scarce (but see Thiollay 1977, 1989 and references therein), although repeated country-wide surveys between the late 1960s and 2003–04 show that many raptors have significantly declined over vast areas (Thiollay 2006). Northern Cameroon has been relatively well visited by ornithologists compared to some other countries in the region (see Louette 1981, Dowsett *et al.* 2013). The avifauna of the Waza-Logone floodplains in particular has been relatively well documented (Fry 1970, Mundy 1972, Robertson 1992, Sørensen *et al.* 1996, Scholte *et al.* 1999), including surveys that focused specifically on raptors (Thiollay 1978a, 2001, Scholte 1998). However, few recent publications cover the savanna region south of the Waza-Logone area, most providing merely isolated records of new or rare species based on short visits (e.g. Girard & Thal 1996, Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 2000, Languy *et al.* 2005), including raptors (Mills *et al.* 2003). The lack of knowledge is especially pronounced for the vast Bénoué Valley, one of the few large conservation complexes in western Africa and potentially of great importance to disturbance-sensitive large raptors. To fill some of this knowledge gap, we present information on the raptor community of northern Cameroon, collected between December 2005 and December 2010.

Study area and Methods

Surveys were mostly conducted in the Far North and North Regions of Cameroon, but extended into the Adamawa Region (Fig. 1). Rains occur between April into October, peaking in June–

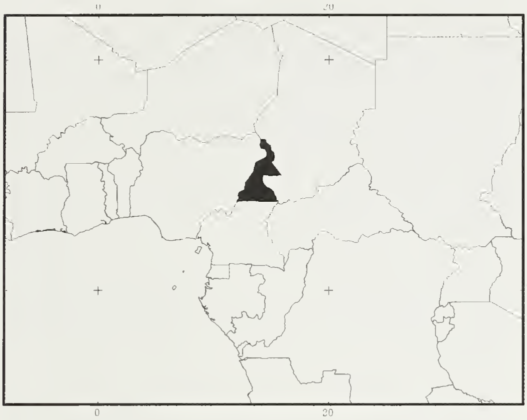
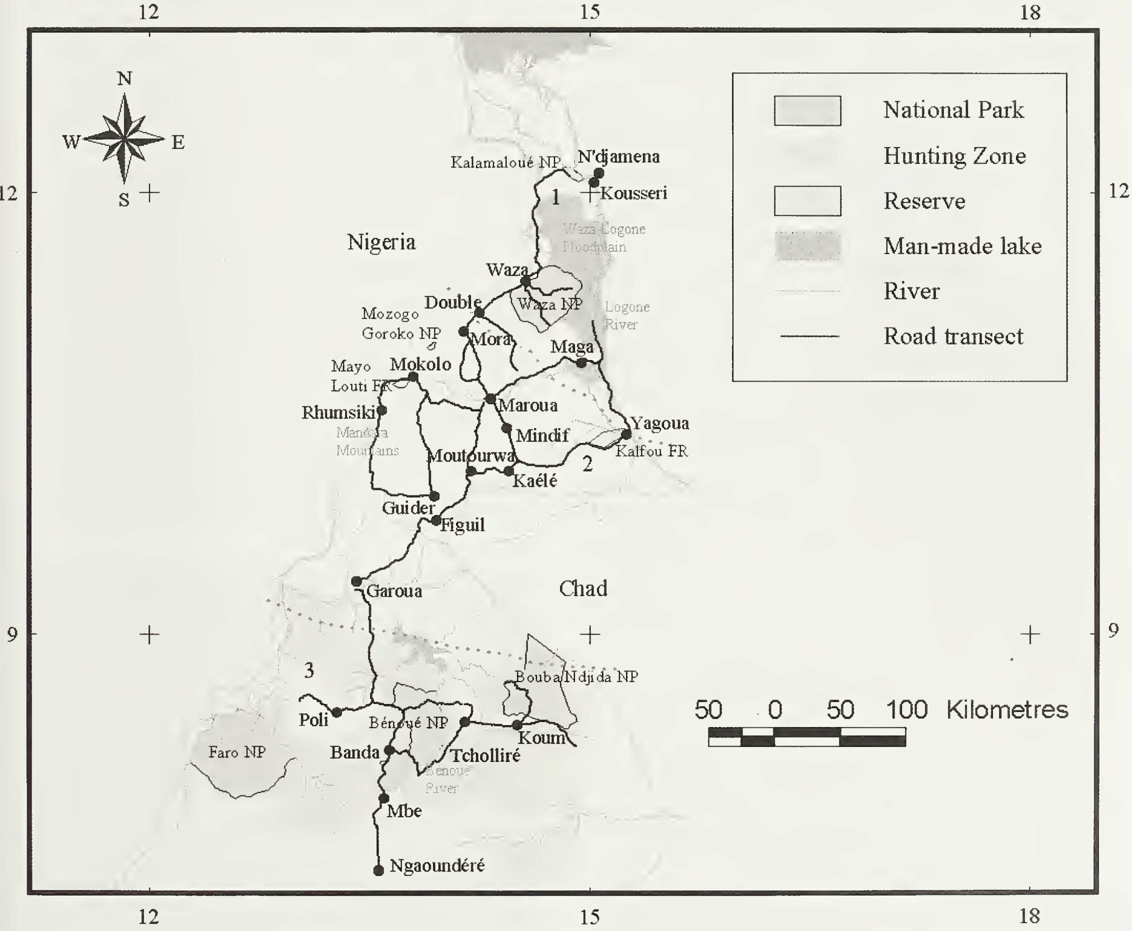


Figure 1. Study area in northern Cameroon, and map with location of road transects. Dotted lines indicate the boundaries of the inundation zone (1), the Sudan zone (2) and the Bénoué Valley (3).

Zone d'étude au Cameroun du nord et carte indiquant les routes des transects. Les lignes en pointillés indiquent les limites de la zone d'inondation (1), la zone soudanienne (2) et la vallée de la Bénoué (3).



September in the north and in May–October in the south. Mean annual temperatures vary from 24°C in the south to 28°C in the north, and peak in March–May, when they reach 47°C in the inundation zone.

Road surveys covered three biogeographical zones, which are representative of three main savanna types between the 450–1,600 isohyets in western Africa (White 1983) differing in productivity and vegetation composition. The inundation zone in the Far North Region encompasses the 8,000-km^2 Waza-Logone floodplains fringed by dry woodlands on higher ground. It is dominated by a Sahelian climate, and located at the transition of the Sahel and Sudan climatic zones (rainfall: 450–700 mm / year), in the southern Lake Chad Basin. Habitat is dominated by the partially flooded grasslands of the Waza-Logone area, with communities of *Acacia* and broad-leaved trees (White 1983), notably *Sclerocarya birrea* woodland with *Anogeissus leiocarpus*, *Balanites aegyptiaca* and *Acacia seyal*. Agriculture is mainly dry-season sorghum, millet and rice. The 1,700-km^2 Waza National Park (NP) and 45-km^2 Kalamaloué NP protect part of the floodplains, but poaching is a serious threat to wildlife (Scholte 2003, Tumenta *et al.* 2010).

The Sudan savanna zone to the south (rainfall: 700–1,100 mm / year) is characterised by hilly terrain that rises to the Mandara Mountains in the west (500–1,000 m in the highest parts), with undifferentiated Sudanian woodlands ('North Sudanian zone': White 1983). Heavily exploited forest reserves and Mozogo-Gokoro NP support trees such as *Isoberlinia doka*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, *Piliostigma reticulatum* and *Combretum erythrophyllum*. Local people grow sorghum, millet, maize, beans, cotton and groundnut.

The Bénoué Valley is situated in the area of highest rainfall (1,100–1,600 mm / year). It lies on undulating terrain with some scattered rocky outcrops, south to Ngaoundéré on the Adamawa Plateau ('South Sudanian zone': White 1983), and has often been referred to as the Northern Guinea savanna belt (e.g. Thiollay 1989). The Bénoué Valley encompasses a large river system and three national parks (Bénoué, Bouba Ndjida and Faro) covering *c.*7,600 km^2 with *Isoberlinia doka*-dominated wooded savanna and *Anogeissus leiocarpus*-dominated riparian forests along watercourses. Twenty-eight sport-hunting zones cover an additional 16,000 km^2 and are managed as protected areas, with hunting quotas for larger mammals and gamebirds (Mayaka 2002). Cultivation consists of traditional crops such as millet, but increasingly cotton.

Most survey time was in the form of road transects (*cf.* Buij *et al.* 2013b for details), as well as point counts (e.g. for harriers; see Buij *et al.* 2012 for details), from December 2005 to December 2010, and while studying land-use effects on raptors as part of a Ph.D. study conducted in northern Cameroon from March 2007 (*cf.* Buij 2013 for details). Surveys covered all major habitat types, including cultivated land, national parks (Waza, Kalamaloué, Mozogo-Gokoro, Bénoué, Faro and Bouba Ndjida), hunting zones (Bénoué Valley) and forest reserves (FR; Kalfou and Mayo Louti). To determine the relative abundance of raptors in the dry and wet seasons, eight road transects each of 35–115 km were surveyed in each zone, totalling 425 km in the inundation zone, 897 km in the Sudan zone and 603 km in the Bénoué Valley (*cf.* Buij *et al.* 2013b). These were surveyed eight times, once every six-month period between March 2007 and December 2010, by both authors, from a slow-moving vehicle. We repeated surveys four times in the dry (15 October–15 April) and four times in the wet seasons (15 April–15 October). In the Bénoué Valley, 90 km of transect (the area east of Tchollire) was inaccessible in the wet season and therefore was surveyed only during the dry season. Repeat transects were initiated from opposite directions to reduce time bias in raptor detectability in response to increasing air temperatures. Apart from repeated transects, an additional 675 km of road surveys were driven in the inundation zone during the dry season (October–December, February–March) and 327 km during the wet season (April–May, August–September); and in the Sudan zone, 1,040 km during the dry season (October–December, March–April) and 110 km during the wet season (July). These counts were used to examine monthly variations in abundance at different latitudes (i.e. not average dry- and wet-season estimates). Road transects started at 06.30–07.30 hrs and ended before 12.30–13.30 hrs.

Transect counts provided an index of relative abundance (*N* / 100 km), which was averaged for the entire survey period, separately for dry and wet seasons, or provided as monthly values for separate transects. Road counts were augmented by opportunistic observations, one-hour point counts (in 2006 and 2009–10), whereby all raptors in view were recorded, and stationary counts during other field studies, in the Waza-Logone area and Bénoué Valley. These covered all months, but some areas were more extensively covered during the dry than the wet season, notably the floodplains west of the Logone River and the eastern Bénoué Valley.

Birds were identified based on available literature (e.g. Forsman 1999, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001) and various species-specific publications (e.g. Shirihai & Forsman 1991, Forsman 1995, 1998, Clark 1996, 2004, Clark & Schmitt 1998). Plumage descriptions follow Clark (2004), e.g. juvenile is that plumage retained until first annual moult.

Results and Discussion

We recorded 60 raptor species, as follows. Species of conservation concern (IUCN 2013) are indicated by EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable and NT = Near Threatened. Sequence and taxonomy follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013).

Secretary-bird *Sagittarius serpentarius* VU

Sedentary. Mostly seen in woodland within Waza NP (often drinking at waterholes in February–May), but also on the floodplain, and near the Logone River 60 km south of Maga (one, 2 June 2007). Singles or 1–2 pairs noted annually in Waza NP, in all months except September. One pair often foraged on burnt grasslands in the western section of Waza NP in November–December 2007, 2008 and 2010. A pair with a dependent juvenile in Waza NP in February 2007 were possibly indicative of (nearby) breeding (Fig. 2). One in Waza NP in February 1973 (Thiollay 1978a, who attributed the species' rarity there to seasonal flooding), and one in the hills south of Mora in 1971 (Holmes 1972), but regular observations in Waza and Kalamaloué NPs in the 1990s (Scholte *et al.* 1999). Rare south of the inundation zone, with two records in Bouba Ndjida NP, both in April (2007/2010), possibly indicative of southward movement during the dry season (Thiollay 1978b). A specimen from Boki (van den Elzen 1975). Has strongly declined throughout West Africa and is on the brink of regional extinction (Hofmeyr *et al.* in prep.).

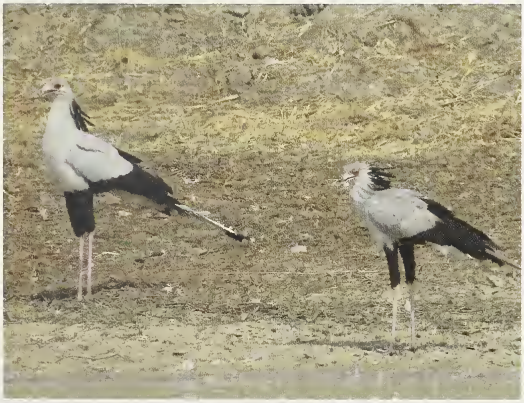


Figure 2. Adult and juvenile Secretary-bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 22 February 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Messagers sagittaires *Sagittarius serpentarius* adulte et juvénile, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 22 février 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Palearctic migrant. Twenty-one recorded, mostly observed hunting over the Logone River, Lake Maga or canals of the Maga rice scheme, in October–April, but occurs throughout the study area south to Poli. A juvenile often roosted on a pruned *Acacia* near Maga town in October–November 2007. Max. on or near Lake Maga just three; in comparison, seven reported near Maga on 16 January 1993 (Scholte *et al.* 1999) and five during a census on and around the lake in January–February 2000 (Thiollay 2001). Further, along 23 km of the Logone River, between Pousse and Tikélé, 0.13 birds / km were recorded in January 2001 (Zwarts *et al.* 2009); mean abundance along the same stretch of river was 0.03 birds / km in 2005–10 (six counts in October–May; range: 0–0.10 birds / km). Along another 45–66 km of the Logone River and adjoining floodplains between Pousse and Yagoua, mean abundance was 0.02 birds / km (seven counts in November–May; range 0–0.07 birds / km). These data suggest a decline; Osprey may be vulnerable to shooting, trapping, contamination of surface water and reduced fish stocks in Sahelian floodplains, including the Lake Chad Basin (Zwarts *et al.* 2009). Earliest date: 27 October 2007, near Maga; latest: 29 May 2008, over the Logone near Yagoua. None recorded during the boreal summer, but one on 29 August 1994 in the Waza-Logone region had presumably over-summered (Scholte *et al.* 1999), and ringing recoveries from West Africa reveal that small numbers do so (EURING database).

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Recorded year-round in most areas, but local movements in the Far North Region. This rodent specialist increased threefold in northern Cameroon between 1973 and 2000 (Thiollay

2001) and appears to be one of the few species that has benefitted from deforestation and expanding cultivation. Common throughout the north, particularly in the inundation zone (mean density 7.9 birds / 100 km), but scarce in continuous woodlands of the Bénoué Valley and absent from parts of the floodplain during the inundation: abundance peaks in February–March (10.9 birds / 100 km), but gradually declines from the early rains (May–June: 6.8 birds / 100 km) to October (1.2 birds / 100 km), following which an influx occurs in November–December (7.6 birds / 100 km). This suggests exodus from the inundation zone during the rains, when high grass cover and flooding depress prey availability. Thiollay (1977) noted a four to eightfold increase in abundance in the Sahel in July–November, so such movements may be northwards. However, the species is observed year-round in other areas, such as rice fields and cultivated areas in the Sudan zone (dry season: 3.2 birds / 100 km; wet: 2.4 birds / 100 km) and the Bénoué Valley (dry season: 2.9 birds / 100 km; wet: 4.6 birds / 100 km). Courtship and mating in the Far North Region observed in December–January, and pairs at nests in January–April. Five nests were in *Faidherbia albida* trees among sorghum (2) and rice fields (3, but up to five breeding pairs) in the inundation zone.

African Swallow-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii*
Intra-African migrant. Common in dry wooded grasslands of the inundation zone, especially in December–June (abundance: 28.3 birds / 100 km), after which moves north into the Sahel; few linger to late July, none seen mid August–October, when present in small numbers further north (Gustafsson *et al.* 2003). Unlike in Nigeria, where this species is nowhere common and regular (mainly February in the Far North Region, also June–July: Elgood *et al.* 1973), it occurs regularly at the Waza-Logone floodplain, where it breeds singly or in colonies of 2–13 nests in woodlands and around cultivated fields and settlements, in April–July (mean 0.6 nests / km^2; Buij *et al.* 2013a). Much less numerous in the Sudan zone, where 2.55 birds / 100 km in the dry and 1.06 birds / 100 km in the wet season. Two adults south of Garoua on 9 March 2008 (09°10'N 13°49'E) and 23 December 2008 (08°98'N 13°53'E). A single group of 211 individuals flying high over the centre of Waza NP in the morning of 13 January 2009 was perhaps indicative of a nearby roost (*cf.* Buij *et al.* 2013a), and comparable in size to a group of 200 in April 1966 in Waza NP (De Greling 1972). Reptiles important in diet during breeding season (Buij *et al.* 2013a), but in non-breeding season takes mostly grasshoppers, and few reptiles (Fig. 3). No significant decline reported in northern Cameroon between 1973 and 2000 (Thiollay 2001), contrary to the situation outside protected areas in central West Africa (Thiollay 2006). Appears to adapt to modified habitats but may be impacted by loss of tree cover; nesting success in northern Cameroon rather low at 17% (Buij *et al.* 2013a).

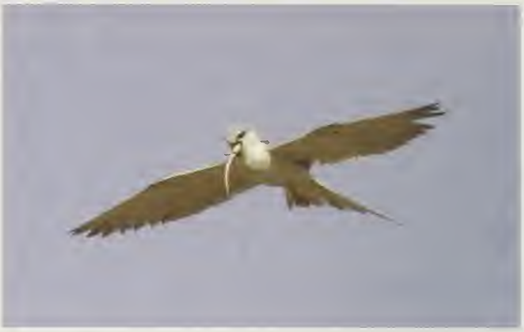


Figure 3. Juvenile African Swallow-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii* swallowing a skink (Scincidae sp.), near Mora, Cameroon, 31 March 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Élanion naucler *Chelictinia riocourii* juvénile avalant un lézard (Scincidae sp.), près de Mora, Cameroun, 31 mars 2007 (Ralph Buij)

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
Palearctic migrant. Observed between 1 September and 16 June (17 in the Far North Region and 14 in North Region). Eighteen (58%) were seen 22 April–16 May, including six adults (five males, one female) circling north at low altitude in Waza NP on 5 May 2010 and an adult female perched and later flying through riverine woodland at Bénoué NP on 22 April 2006 (Fig. 4). Eleven (35%) were recorded 1 September–1 December. Most were flying high or rapidly gaining height, which together with the boreal spring and autumn peaks in records indicate that Cameroon's savannas are mostly crossed en route to the main wintering range in the forest zone (*cf.* Thiollay 1977). This is supported by observations of satellite-tracked birds from Sweden, which reached their West African wintering grounds at a mean latitude

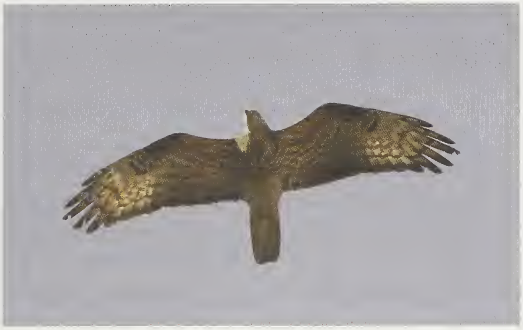


Figure 4. Adult female European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, Bénoué National Park, Cameroon, 22 April 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Bondrée apivore *Pernis apivorus*, femelle adulte, Parc National de la Bénoué, Cameroun, 22 avril 2006 (Ralph Buij)

of 06°24'N in September–November (Hake *et al.* 2003), although immatures may remain at relatively northerly latitudes, between 09°54'N and 13°35'N, before moving further south in November (Strandberg *et al.* 2012). All previous records in the Waza-Logone area were in the boreal autumn: three in October, two in November (Scholte *et al.* 1999) and five on 10–11 September 1975 (Thiollay 1978a); two were seen in the Lake Chad region of Nigeria on 14 September 2000 (Gustafsson *et al.* 2003).

African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*
Sedentary, but local movements cannot be excluded (*cf.* Elgood *et al.* 1973). Recorded year-round but most frequently during the rains, when pairs are presumably breeding and therefore more conspicuous (Brown 1970). Uncommon in the Bénoué Valley (15 birds; December, April–September) in woodland, riverine forest and at woodland edge, also over cultivation. Twice an adult pair was observed hunting; in both cases the birds perched 5–100 m from each other 3–6 m above ground while scanning the surrounding trees and ground for prey. A pair performed an undulating display flight (no calls heard) on 27 July 2009, *c.*5 km south of Banda. A pair circling over Kalfou FR on 25 July 2008 and an adult there on 3 October 2008. A juvenile circling in Waza NP on 2 July 2010 is the northernmost record for Cameroon; a second-year was seen perched in *Eucalyptus* near Maga on 8 December 2007. Other records of single adults in flight in May and July, near Maroua and Rhumsiki. These are the first published records north of Ngaoundaba (07°08'N) and suggest that the species has previously been overlooked in northern Cameroon.

African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*
Throughout the north in small numbers, but commonest in the Bénoué Valley (mean 1.0 bird / 100 km). No evidence of seasonal movements northwards with the rains (*cf.* Thiollay 1978b) and the only record north of Waza was in August. Observed predating weaver (Ploceidae spp.) nestlings in trees along the Bénoué River, African Swallow-tailed Kite nestlings in the Far North Region (Buij *et al.* 2013a) and two adults were observed probing cavities in Waza Rock (probably for bats, possibly lizards). Individuals of all ages at waterholes in Waza NP in March–April. Two adults found dead after pesticide poisoning of a waterhole in Waza NP by local poachers in February 2010.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* EN
Palearctic migrant and local resident. Groups of 2–19 (mean: 8.8 birds ± 5.9) were observed each year between 27 November and 24 April in Waza NP, where most were recorded in December–March (90%; *n* = 118). One adult on 8 May 2007, another on 1 June 2008 and a third-year on 3 July 2010 in Waza NP. Of aged birds in 2006–10, 44% were adults (fourth-year plumage or older; *n* = 115). Often in groups near waterholes (Fig. 5) and twice at carcasses (goat *Capra aegagrus hircus*, Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis*) with Rüppell's *Gyps rueppelli*, Lappet-faced *Torgos tracheliotos* and White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus*; also seen consuming grasshoppers. Other Waza records include up to four daily in December 1990 (Robertson 1992), ten on 15 November 1993 (Sørensen *et al.* 1996) and a group of 21 on 14 December 1996 (Scholte 1998). Past Nigerian occurrences have also been mainly in December–February (Elgood *et al.* 1966). Apart from these birds, probably of Palearctic origin (*cf.* Thiollay 1977, 1989), presumed residents were recorded in the Mandara Mountains near Rhumsiki at 1,100 m above sea level, in November and July–August. An adult pair was frequently seen at this locality, once three adults near a dead donkey *Equus asinus*, but no juveniles. Scholte (1998)

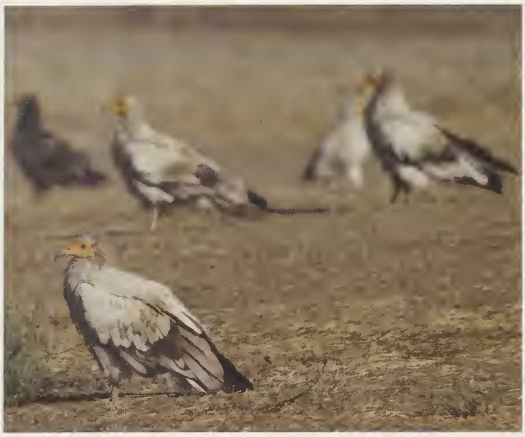


Figure 5. Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* at waterhole, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 14 January 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Percnoptères d'Égypte *Neophron percnopterus* à un point d'eau, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 14 janvier 2007 (Ralph Buij)

concluded that breeding occurred here in 1997, based on a juvenile apparently with two adults on 21 September 1997. Also reported breeding elsewhere in the region (e.g. northern Nigeria: Elgood *et al.* 1994).

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* NT
Sedentary and local. Most common in national parks (Fig. 6), where encountered at carcasses of Giraffe, Topi *Damaliscus korrigum* and Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus.* Five seen in the Mandara Mountains. Its relative rarity outside national parks corresponds with a significant decline in northern Cameroon in 1973–2000 and away from protected areas in central West Africa since the 1970s (Thiollay 2001, 2006). Threats inside parks include poisoning of carcasses and waterholes, nest disturbance and declining food supplies. Often seen flying repeatedly over recently burnt grasslands, especially in the Bénoué Valley. Relative abundance highest during the rains, with 4.4 birds / 100 km in the inundation zone (dry season: 1.9 birds / 100 km) and 3.2 birds / 100 km in the Bénoué Valley (dry season: 2.4 birds / 100 km). Family groups of adults with juveniles in Waza NP in August–October. A roost of six discovered in Bouba Ndjida NP in April 2010.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*
Common Palearctic migrant in the inundation zone, October–June. Abundance: 0.7 birds / 100 km in October, 6.7 in November, 4.0 in December, 7.6 in January, 5.8 in February, 2.9 in March and 1.1 in April. Earliest record: 11 October 2008, near Kousseri. Last dates: 24 June 2009 (second-year) and 5–6 May 2010 (two of unknown age), in Waza NP. Widespread but scarcer in lowland grasslands, cultivation and hills south of the inundation zone (one in the Mandara Mountains at *c.*900 m above sea level). Only snakes recorded as prey (twice), but monitor

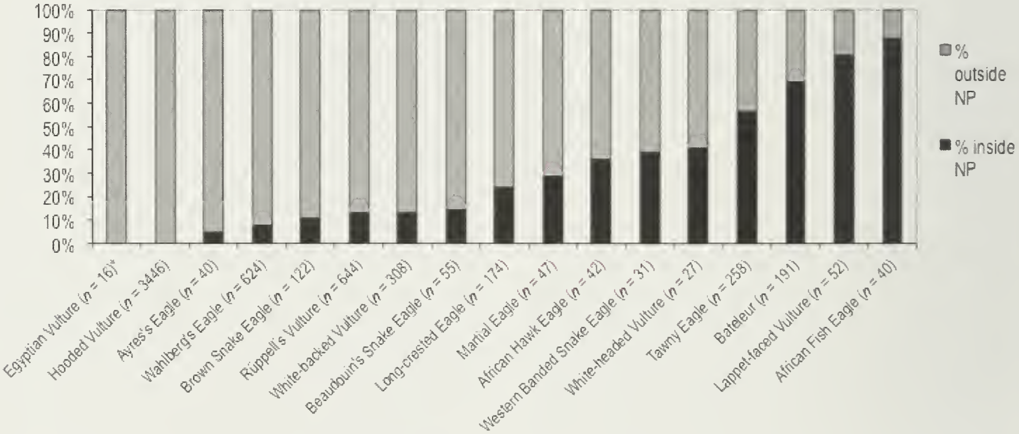


Figure 6. Percentage of Afrotropical eagles and vultures (*n* indicated) counted in and outside the national parks of northern Cameroon, 2006–10. *) only presumed sedentary birds.

Pourcentage d'aigles afrotropicaux et de vautours (*n* indiqué) recensé à l'intérieur et en dehors des parcs nationaux au nord du Cameroun, 2006–10. *) oiseaux présumés sédentaires uniquement.

lizards apparently also important (Thiollay 1977). Three records near Koum, in December (two) and February (one). Wing moult in adults in December–February.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* VU

Intra-African migrant. Declined in central West Africa in 1969–2004 (Thiollay 2006), and breeding densities are low but dry-season numbers are traditionally under-recorded due to confusion with Short-toed Snake Eagle (e.g. Elgood *et al.* 1973). Juveniles and (fewer) subadults are widespread but scarce in the inundation zone during the dry season (mean 0.5 birds / 100 km), when *gallicus* is almost ten times more numerous. During this period *C. beaudouini* is widespread and uncommon in the Bénoué Valley (0.1 birds / 100 km), where there are probably no more than *c.*30 pairs, and in extensive woodlands further south: during the dry season, two were seen on the Adamawa Plateau, south of Ngaoundéré, and records exist south to Mount Cameroon (M. Languy *in litt.* 2013), but no nests have been found. From May (some in April; Fig. 7), adults move north to join juveniles and subadults; the species is then also observed in the Mandara Mountains, but is commonest in the inundation zone where there is an almost fourfold increase to 1.9 birds / 100 km during the rains (adults then outnumber juveniles / subadults 4:1). Migrants congregate in *Sclerocarya* woodlands south-west of the floodplain, where seasonal pools and patchy, still rather low, grass offer an abundance of accessible prey, especially in June–July. Snakes (30–60 cm) were caught on three occasions in Waza NP, where up to five (juveniles and adults) foraged over a 3-ha area in July. Distance analysis (*cf.* Buij 2013) of 160 km of transect surveys in July 2007–08 in the southern woodlands of the inundation zone (Waza village–Andirni–Pete–

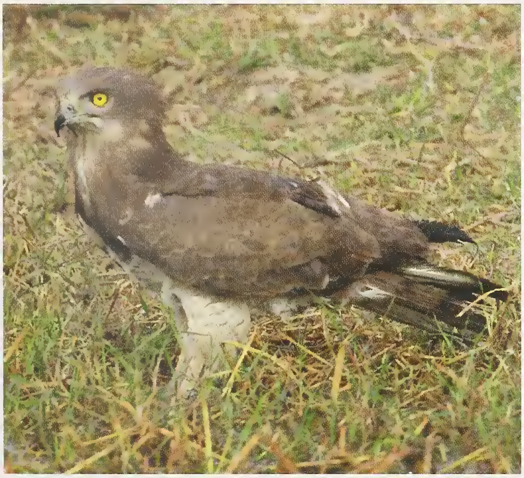
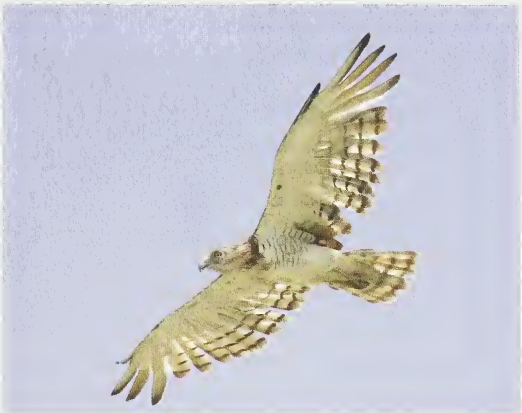


Figure 7. Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* drinking, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 15 April 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* adulte en train de boire, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 15 avril 2010 (Ralph Buij)



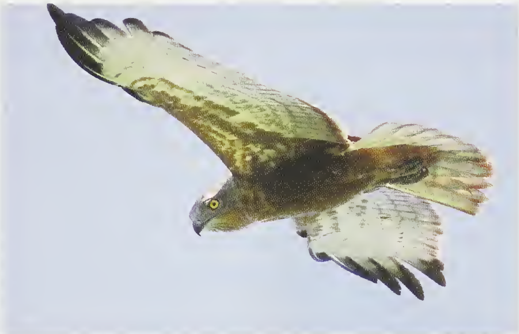


Figure 8 (top). Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* in moult, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 20 July 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* adulte en mue, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 20 juillet 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 9 (bottom). Juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 25 July 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* juvénile, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 25 juillet 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Waza village) produced *c.*0.19 birds / km^2, or *c.*266 individuals if extrapolated to the total area of similar habitat where surveys were conducted (*c.*1,400 km^2). Three were seen hunting in August in the Far North Region, south of Kousseri. In contrast, none was detected on road transects in June–August in the Bénoué Valley, where four moved north in May. Southbound migration was noted from September, with one adult 10 km south of Garoua. No adults in the Far North Region after November. A nesting record of '*C. gallicus / beaudouini*' in December–February in Waza NP by Scholte *et al.* (1999) is unusual in light of these observations. Most adults moulting in July–September (Fig. 8) and fresh juveniles in July (Fig. 9).

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*
Most common year-round in the Bénoué Valley (mean 2.1 birds / 100 km); often seen perched high above ground on electricity pylons, in shrublands or cultivated areas and relatively few in national parks (Fig. 6). Pairs are widespread but less common in the Sudan zone (0.4 birds / 100 km). Observed in the inundation zone only during the rains (July–August), mostly juveniles. Thiollay (1977) reported it bred frequently at 10–13°N in Nigeria in the 1970s. An adult caught a *c.*50-cm snake in cultivated fields west of Tchollirê on 21 March 2009, and another was seen with a snake near Ngaoundéré on 25 June 2008.

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*
Secretive but frequent in the Bénoué Valley, where year-round resident in savanna and riverine woodlands of Bénoué and Bouba Ndjida NPs, and surrounding hunting zones (year-round abundance: 0.6 birds / 100 km). Single adults and juveniles seen hunting over cultivated areas at the edge of woodland in the Bénoué Valley, especially during the rains, when high grass probably limits prey accessibility. One pair in Bénoué NP was most vocal in June–July, often calling during early morning from a dead tree in riverine forest, but also quite vocal during the dry season (January–April), mainly singing during aerial displays; also heard in March in Faro NP (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999). Only one was observed north of the Bénoué Valley: an adult perched at the edge of woodland near Guider on 15 July 2008. None in the inundation zone, where three were noted in February / April 1973 (Thiollay 1978a), and two in the 1990s (Kalamaloué NP, February and June: Scholte *et al.* 1999).

White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis* VU
Rare resident in the inundation and Sudan zones (records in October, November, January, February, April–July). Two pairs and second- to fourth-year birds were regularly seen in the woodland zone of Waza NP, where a pair bred in 1969 (Fry 1970) and which was considered part of the small, fragmented western African breeding range by Mundy *et al.* (1992). Single juveniles in Waza NP on 30 November 2008 and 31 December 2006 suggest one or more pairs might still nest in the Far North Region. Other pairs were seen throughout the north, over wooded valleys in the Mandara Mountains, but most commonly in the Bénoué Valley (where on average 0.4 birds / 100 km and recorded in December, February, March, May and August).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* EN
Sedentary. Together with Black Kite the commonest raptor in northern Cameroon, where highest abundance year-round in the Sudan savanna zone (36.9 birds / 100 km); several nests in Maroua and near Mokolo, where it breeds in December–June (*cf.* Scholte 1998). Often associated with human settlements, permanent or temporary, few seen in Waza NP, none in the protected areas of the Bénoué Valley but seen in Bénoué and Faro NPs in March 1999 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999). Mean abundance in the Sudan zone was 38.7 birds / 100 km in January–April vs. 28.4 birds / 100 km in July–September, possibly indicative of some seasonal movements with the rains (*cf.* Thiollay 1977). However, no wet-season influx noted further north. Congregates at slaughterhouses in large towns throughout the region (Maroua, Garoua, Ngaoundéré), where several tens (max. 81 together; Fig. 10), and at termite swarms during the rains also in large towns (e.g. Maroua). Three and a Rüppell's Vulture feeding on a human corpse near Maroua in 2007. Declined 67% in northern Cameroon in 1973–2000 (Thiollay 2001); in 1996 >100 Hooded Vultures died of an unknown cause as some 'literally fell out of the trees' in the town of Maroua (Scholte 1998). Frequently

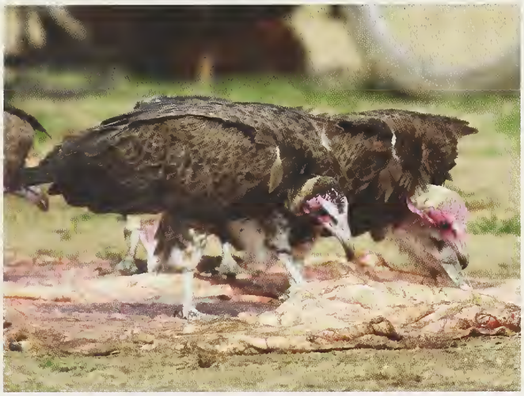


Figure 10. Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus* at slaughterhouse, Maroua, Cameroon, 13 October 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Vautours charognards *Necrosyrtes monachus* près d'un abattoir, Maroua, Cameroun, 13 octobre 2010 (Ralph Buij)

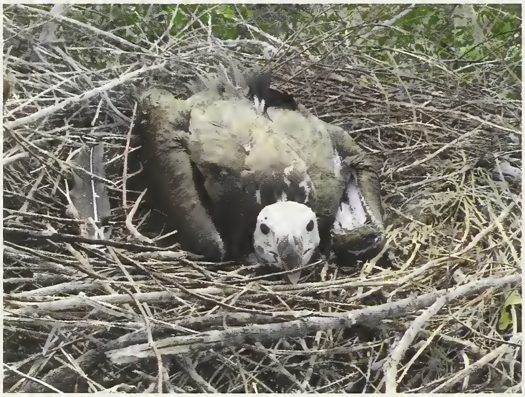
sought for consumption and traditional medicine trade, especially with the disappearance of larger vulture species, and dried individuals, eggs and parts are sold at markets in Garoua and Maroua (Ogada & Buij 2011).

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* EN
Sedentary, but more were seen in the south during the rains. Recorded throughout the region, in groups of up to 37 in the inundation zone, where apparently resident and common year-round with a mean 5.3 birds / 100 km. Declined 60% in 1973–2000 in northern Cameroon (Thiollay 2001). Three pairs nested in Waza NP in December 1971 (Mundy 1972) and it was apparently still 'common to abundant' in the Lake Chad Basin in the 1990s, when six nests with young were found in Waza and Kalamaloué NPs (Scholte 1998). Two occupied nests, one with a fully feathered nestling, in Waza NP in January–April 2006, but none thereafter despite intensive surveys in 2009–10. Interviews with local communities indicate that up to 40 vultures were poisoned at a Waza waterhole in the early 2000s, mostly *Gyps* spp., mainly to supply the traditional medicine trade in Nigeria (Buij & Mohamadou unpubl.). Increased intrusion by poachers and livestock herders may have negatively impacted disturbance-sensitive breeding pairs. According to local reports, nests have been set on fire and poles used to facilitate collection of chicks. At the start of the rains groups are associated with transhumance nomads and livestock herds moving through the inundation zone, but more commonly associated with the human-populated alluvial plains of the Logone than with the protected woodlands of Waza NP in October–July (Buij & Croes 2013). Also regular year-round throughout the Bénoué Valley, but more common during the wet season (dry season: 0.8 birds / 100 km, wet season: 1.7 birds / 100 km), feeding on carcasses of wild herbivores (e.g. five at a dead Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*). Locally common south of Ngaoundéré (cultivation, grasslands, settlements including intensive cattle farms): five in March, eight in May, seven in June, 15 in July, 26 in August and 17 in December.

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppelli* EN
Sedentary in the Sudan zone; commonest in the south during the rains and in the north in the dry season. The commonest vulture away from protected areas after Hooded Vulture, but it declined 87% in 1973–2000 (Thiollay 2001). Nests were found during the dry season in the Mandara Mountains, especially on and near the peaks at Rhumsiki (at least 17 pairs) and near Mindif (max. 8–10 pairs), where most nests are inaccessible to humans. None was recorded on the more easily accessible Waza Rock or elsewhere in Waza NP. At least 12 pairs nested on Waza Rock in the 1970s (Mundy & Cook 1972), 20–30 pairs in 1993 (Scholte 1998), with two additional pairs at nests in *Acacia* trees and one brooding bird in November–December 1993 (Sørensen *et al.* 1996), but only four nests on Waza Rock in 1997 (Scholte 1998). More common in the dry (4.2 birds / 100 km) than the wet season (1.7 birds / 100 km) in the inundation zone, with large groups in Waza NP in December–April (up to 18 together). Similar numbers year-round in the Sudan zone (6.6 birds / 100 km) suggest breeding pairs there are more sedentary. Counts on 36-km road transect on the Adamawa Plateau south of Ngaoundéré higher during the rains: five in December, 20 in May, 27 in June, nine in August; numbers also higher in the Bénoué Valley during the wet (1.4 birds / 100 km) than the dry season (0.3 birds / 100 km). Groups gathered at wild herbivore (Waza, Bénoué NPs) and livestock carcasses (e.g. 13 on a dead donkey near Guider on 4 June 2008).

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* VU
Almost exclusively seen in the inundation zone, where present year-round (mean 1.6 birds / 100 km), with highest numbers in the dry season. Singles further south near Faro and Bouba Ndjida NP, both in May (another in Faro in March 1999; Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999). Observed with Hooded Vultures near nomad settlements, and seen feeding on cow carcasses three times, but a relatively large proportion were inside national parks (Fig. 6). Bred at Waza Rock in the 1970s (Louette 1981), but none thereafter in Waza NP (Scholte 1998). Two pairs bred in Waza NP in 2009–10 atop *Balanites aegyptiaca* trees, with large nestlings in June (Fig. 11) and a fledgling mid July; this suggests that breeding may have either gone unnoticed for a period or has resumed. Three pellets at a nest in Waza NP contained goat hairs; breeding pairs were often seen on foraging trips outside the park. Thiollay (2001) recorded too few to establish a trend in Cameroon, but noted a significant decline in central West Africa in 1973–2000, with none seen outside protected areas during recent surveys (Thiollay 2006). An exceptional group of 26 was near Kingueroua waterhole in Waza NP on 27 February 2008 (Fig. 12).

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*
Sedentary. Patchily recorded in small numbers throughout the study area; however, probably under-recorded due to the species being mainly active at dawn and dusk. Three pairs and 1–2 juveniles were seen hunting bats at dusk (twice at dawn) year-round above rivers and the tourist camps of Bénoué, Faro and Bouba Ndjida NPs. A minimum of 14 bats caught by two adults during 18 minutes at dusk in February 2008 at Bénoué NP. Previously published records in the Bénoué Valley were from Bénoué NP (several at two localities at least: Robertson 1992, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999), Koum (Louette 1981) and two in Faro NP, including one drinking in mid afternoon (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999). Another adult was seen flying low above ground and on an exposed perch one hour after sunrise in Bouba Ndjida NP in December (Fig. 13). Further north, one flew low over the canopy during the day in Kalfou FR after heavy rains, on 31 August 2009. Juveniles were seen in Waza NP during the day on 5 December 2009 (2), 4 January 2010 (1), and 28 November 2010 (1; Fig. 14). A pair was twice seen hunting bats and circling above Waza village at dusk in July 2010. These complement five records at Waza NP in the 1990s (Scholte *et al.* 1999).



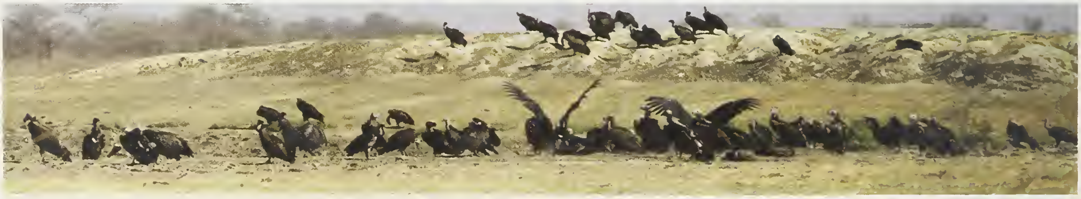
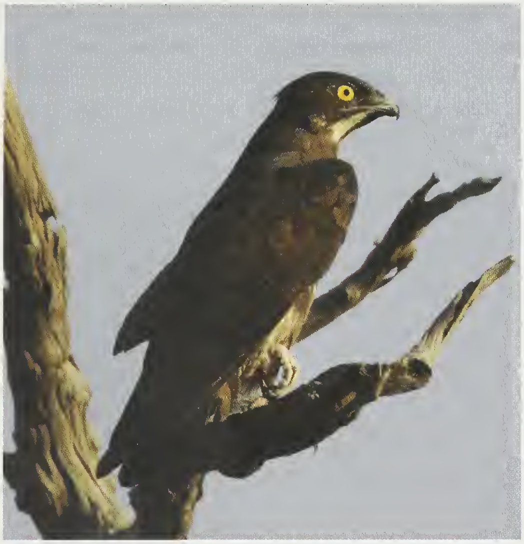


Figure 11 (top). Nestling Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 16 June 2009 (Ralph Buij)

Jeune Vautour oricou *Torgos tracheliotos* au nid, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 16 juin 2009 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 12 (bottom). Group of 26 Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotos* with Rüppell's *Gyps rueppelli* and White-backed Vultures *G. africanus* at Kingueroua waterhole, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 27 February 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Groupe de 26 Vautours oricous *Torgos tracheliotos* avec Vautours de Rüppell *Gyps rueppelli* et Vautours africains *G. africanus* au point d'eau de Kingueroua, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 27 février 2008 (Ralph Buij)



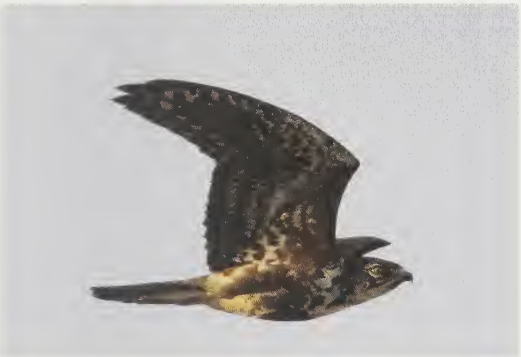


Figure 13 (top). Adult Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*, Bouba Ndjida National Park, Cameroon, 28 December 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Milan des chauves-souris *Macheiramphus alcinus* adulte, Parc National de Bouba Ndjida, Cameroun, 28 décembre 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 14 (bottom). Juvenile Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 28 November 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Milan des chauves-souris *Macheiramphus alcinus* juvénile, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 28 novembre 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* VU

Sedentary. Rare throughout. Mostly recorded in the Bénoué Valley, where year-round mean abundance 0.7 birds / 100 km, south to *c*.40 km north of Ngaoundéré. Of 22 aged birds in the Bénoué Valley, 73% were adults. Based on these results and distance sampling along road transects (Buckland *et al.* 1993) for large (>3 kg) raptors in these savannas (Buij *et al.* 2013c), 106–131 pairs are estimated to occur in the 30,800 km^2 Bénoué Valley, or one pair per 235–290 km^2. No adults seen in the inundation zone, where the species was considered an uncommon resident in the 1990s (Scholte *et al.* 1999), but single juveniles, twice seen stooping at groups of Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*, were observed in Waza NP in May–July 2009 and 2010. At least two pairs in the Mandara Mountains and one pair at Kalfou FR (where also recorded in 2000: Thiollay 2001), and one pair in the hills *c*.17 km north-west of Maroua between May and August 2007–09. The species' often large nest, visible from afar, and its habit of occasionally preying on livestock (Buij & Mohamadou unpubl.), increases its vulnerability to persecution and nest disturbance (J.-M. Thiollay pers. comm.).

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

Sedentary. Widespread, but commonest in the Bénoué Valley, where mean 2.7 birds / 100 km; in the inundation zone 1.1 birds / 100 km. Several breeding pairs south and east of Waza NP, and in well-forested parts of the Mandara Mountains. Often perch-hunts in cultivated areas (sorghum, rice, cotton), occasionally near human habitation but close to woodland, and individuals were seen catching rodents on three occasions (near Maga, Tcholliré). An adult caught two frogs within a 25-minute period in July 2009 at Waza NP. Begging fledglings in October in the Bénoué Valley indicates breeding during the rains.

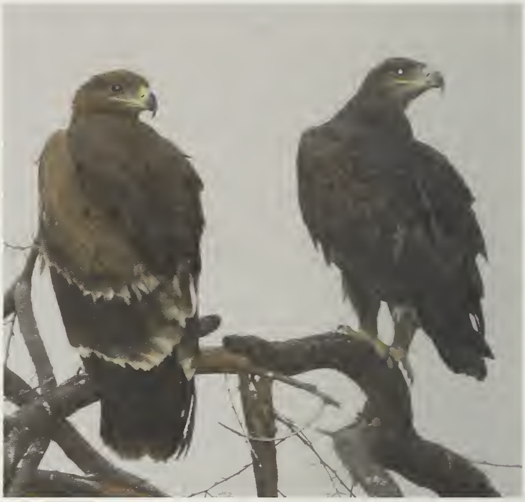
Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina*

Rare Palearctic migrant to the Waza-Logone floodplains with 0–2 individuals observed per dry season. Three over Waza NP, on 23 December 2006 (juvenile), 16 January 2008 (adult) and 5 December 2009, and one over the Logone floodplains north of Maga on 15 March 2010. Previous records: one at Maga on 14 June 1994 (Scholte *et al.* 1999). Thiollay (1978a, 1989) considered it 'quite numerous', but of 82 claimed individuals recorded in the 1970s in northern Cameroon (Thiollay 1978a), most on the Waza-Logone floodplains, an unknown but possibly large proportion were misidentified Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis* (J.-M. Thiollay *in litt.* 2012).

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*
Rare Palearctic migrant. Adult at close range, gaining height near Anane waterhole in Waza NP, on 17 December 2006. Another tentative record in January 2008 in the inundation zone. Only previous records in Cameroon: four in Waza-Logone area in January / April 1973 and four in January / February 2000 (Thiollay 2001), an adult at Maga in February 2000 (M. Languy *in litt.* 2013) and a juvenile in Waza on 11 April 2003 (A. Riley *et al.* in *Bull. ABC* 11: 169).

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*
Partial migrant. Occurs throughout, commonest in the inundation zone, where mean 5.1 birds / 100 km. More than 50% were in national parks (Fig. 6). Least common in the Bénoué Valley during the rains (0.2 birds / 100 km), but more numerous in dry season (0.9 birds / 100 km). Only three seen in August–September in the Far North Region, and none in June–September in the Bénoué Valley suggest northward movements during rains (as in Nigeria: Elgood *et al.* 1973, Thiollay 1977). In groups of up to eight at waterholes in Waza in March–April, four together in rice fields north of Maga in April (both times with Steppe Eagles), and three at a Lion *Panthera leo* kill in Waza NP in May. Four nests in Waza NP, one in Kalamaloué NP, one east of Maroua in farmland, and two (on rocky outcrops and in woodland) in the Mandara Mountains, occupied November–May. Scholte *et al.* (1999) also recorded breeding in Waza and Kalamaloué NPs in December–April. Declined significantly in northern Cameroon in 1973–2000 (Thiollay 2001).

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*
Frequent Palearctic migrant to the inundation zone (mean 3.7 birds / 100 km; Figs. 15–16). Of 36 aged birds in October–May, two were juveniles, eight second-years, four third-years, six fourth-years and 16 adults. First arrivals: two juveniles on 24 October 2010; first adult 12 November 2009 in Waza NP. Latest: third-year on 20 May 2008, in Waza NP. Commonly occurs around rice fields in the inundation zone (Buij & Croes 2013), with six together in December 2009 north of Lake Maga, twice seen catching rodents. Rare away from floodplains: one 40 km west of Yagoua on 15 December 2007. Southernmost records: three together on 21 January 2008 south-west of Tcholliré (08°13'N) and a juvenile in Bouba Ndjida NP on 27 December 2008. These records and those further north (see Ottosson *et al.* 2002) suggest it is a rather common winter



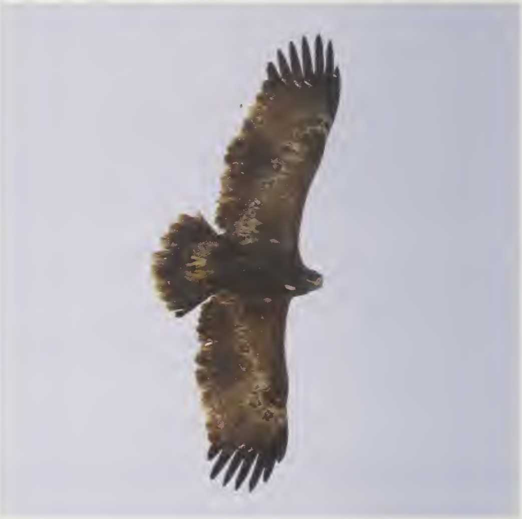


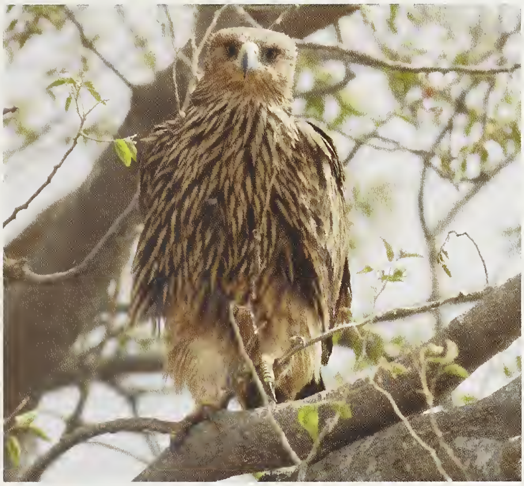
Figure 15 (top). Adult and second-year Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis* at roost, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 31 December 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Aigles des steppes *Aquila nipalensis* adulte et de deuxième année au dortoir, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 31 décembre 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 16 (bottom). Fourth-year Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* in flight over Maga rice fields, Cameroon, 25 December 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle des steppes *Aquila nipalensis* de quatrième année en vol au-dessus des rizières de Maga, Cameroun, 25 décembre 2006 (Ralph Buij) visitor to the Lake Chad Basin. However, only two juveniles were noted in the Waza-Logone area in the 1990s, in February and May (Scholte *et al.* 1999), with nine there in 2000 (Thiollay 2001).

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca VU*
Rare Palearctic migrant. Nine records in the inundation zone, eight of them in Waza NP, involving at least five birds: adult over Douroubatassa waterhole on 23 December 2005; juvenile in the western section of Waza NP on 30 December 2006, 22 February and 18 March 2007 (Fig. 17); juvenile in Waza NP on 15 and 17 January and 29 February 2008 (Fig. 18), pirating food from a Pied Crow *Corvus albus*; fourth-year there on 17 January 2008; and juvenile or second-year north of Lake Maga on 2 February 2009. Previously published records in Cameroon: singles in Waza NP in November 1993 (Sørensen *et al.* 1996), Kalfou FR in February 2000 (Bobo & Njabo 2000) and Tchabal Ngandaba in April 2000 (Njabo *et al.* 2000). Another juvenile was seen at Lake Chad on 14 November 2001, in Nigeria, just west of the border with Cameroon (Velmala & Gustafsson 2003).



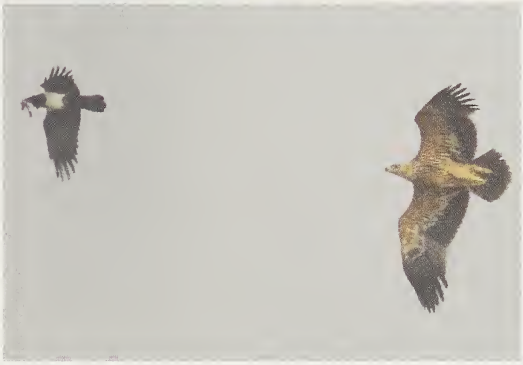


Figure 17 (top). Juvenile Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 18 March 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle impérial *Aquila heliaca* juvénile, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 18 mars 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 18 (bottom). Juvenile Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* chasing Pied Crow *Corvus albus*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 15 January 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle impérial *Aquila heliaca* juvénile poursuivant un Corbeau pie *Corvus albus*, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 15 janvier 2008 (Ralph Buij)

African Hawk Eagle *Aquila spilogaster*
Sedentary. Scarce throughout, commonest in the Bénoué Valley (*cf.* Robertson 1992, Sørensen *et al.* 1996, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999), where 0.8 birds / 100 km, often in national parks (Fig. 6), along river courses, and in surrounding ecotone of farmland and woodland. A few pairs perhaps still breed throughout the Sudan zone in hilly terrain with forest remnants, such as the lower Mandara Mountains, where nest sites and small game (guineafowl, francolins, hyrax) are more secure from human hunting. No adults seen in the inundation zone but up to four juveniles recorded annually (1 June–28 November; Fig. 19), often hunting (young) Rock Hyrax *Procavia*

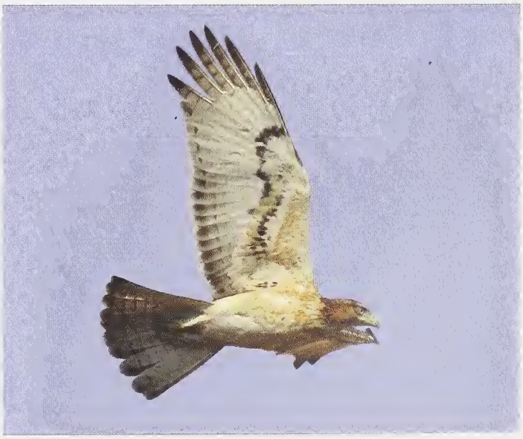


Figure 19. Juvenile African Hawk Eagle *Aquila spilogaster*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 28 November 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle fascié *Aquila spilogaster* juvénile, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 28 novembre 2008 (Ralph Buij) *capensis* and birds, also eating wild figs on rocky outcrops near Waza NP, particularly in July–August. Few previous records in the Waza-Logone area: two in February / April 1973 (Thiollay 1978) and two in the 1990s, in September and December (Robertson 1992, Scholte *et al.* 1999). Primary moult in an adult in March and another in April.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi*
Short- and long-distance intra-African migrant. Found throughout in the dry season, most commonly in the inundation zone (3.8 birds / 100 km), south to 07°19'N in December (but dry-season records to the coast) and mostly outside national parks (Fig. 6). Numbers increase during the rains (Fig. 20), when migrants from southern Africa visit the region, as revealed by two satellite-tracked females from Namibia and South Africa that reached northern Cameroon / north-east Nigeria and south-east Chad, respectively, in late April–May, remaining until mid August (Meyburg *et al.* 1995). Other examples of trans-equatorial migration are of birds ringed in southern Africa recovered in Sudan in April and in Democratic Republic of Congo in August–September (Oatley *et al.* 1998). In the Bénoué Valley, numbers peak with the arrival of short- and long-distance migrants (May), but thereafter decrease sharply, subsequently peaking in the Sudan zone (June) and the inundation zone (July–August; Fig. 20) corresponding with the later start to the rains at higher latitudes. Numbers decline in November–April in the inundation and Sudan zones, but gradually increase in the Bénoué Valley during this period, while most records in the savanna–forest transition zone and all those from the south-east are in the dry season (M. Languy *in litt.* 2013), supporting the hypothesis that local birds move to southern savannas in the dry season. Wahlberg's Eagle breeds from June in *Sclerocarya* woodlands of the inundation zone at a mean density of one pair per 13 km^2 (40 km^2 surveyed). Aerial displays in the inundation zone were mostly observed from June. Four occupied nests were found, one in a large *Faidherbia albida* among cotton fields near Mora on 9 August 2009. One eagle was <100 m from the nest, the other on the nest rim. Three occupied nests with 1–2 adults in attendance, two containing one egg each (12 and 17 July 2010), were within and just south of Waza NP. Given a *c.*4-month period from laying to fledging (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001), nestlings fledge in late September–early November when fires increase accessibility of abundant terrestrial vertebrate prey (Thiollay 1978). All nests were lined with green leaves and sited below the canopy of tall *Sclerocarya birrea*

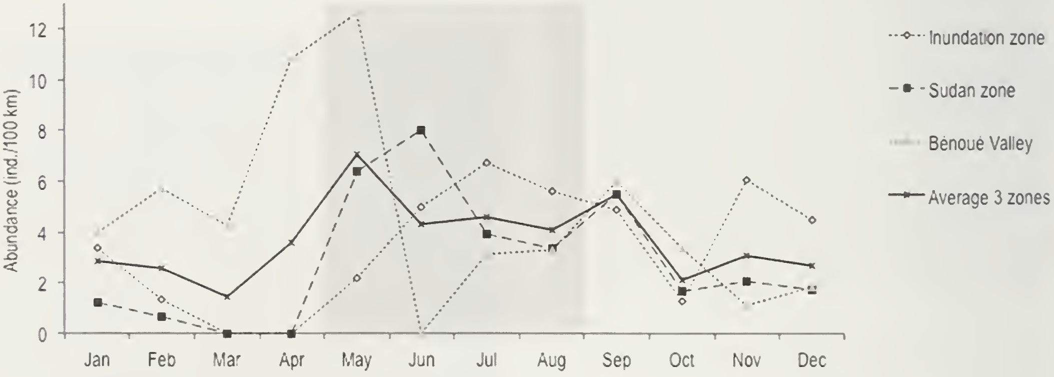


Figure 20. Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* monthly abundance in the three savanna zones of northern Cameroon, and mean abundance for the three zones, based on transect counts 2007–10. The grey block indicates the approximate period spent in northern Cameroon and Nigeria by a satellite-tracked Wahlberg's Eagle that bred in Namibia (source: Meyburg *et al.* 1995)

Abondance mensuelle de l'Aigle de Wahlberg *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* dans les trois zones de savane au nord du Cameroun, et abondance moyenne pour les trois zones, basée sur les recensements le long des transects en 2007–10. La partie en gris indique la période approximative passée au nord du Cameroun et au Nigeria par un Aigle de Wahlberg muni d'une balise Argos qui avait niché en Namibie (source: Meyburg *et al.* 1995) trees, which is typical for Wahlberg's Eagle but does not exclude Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* (R. Simmons & W. Tarboton *in litt.* 2013). Thiollay (1977) recorded nesting pairs in western Africa during the rains at 12°–14°N and saw birds on nests or bringing prey (J.-M. Thiollay *in litt.* 2013), but did not publish details. Two breeding records in Nigeria (by P. Ward & M. Dyer) perhaps best considered uncertain (Brown *et al.* 1982; F. Dowsett-Lemaire *in litt.* 2013), while a record of an occupied nest (female present in June–July) during the rains at Makalondi, south-west Niger, observed over a 14-year period, is unpublished (Souvairan 1990). Two pairs defending seemingly exclusive territories, with two adults accompanied by a begging juvenile, displaying and calling on the Obudu Plateau in south-east Nigeria (06°38'N), just west of the border with Cameroon, in February 2001 (Bijlsma 2001) indicate that dry-season records at southerly latitudes include adults and juveniles. We conclude that Wahlberg's Eagles breeding in the Sahel are unlikely to originate from southern Africa, but instead perform shorter-distance seasonal movements entirely within the region (*cf.* Meyburg *et al.* 1995), visiting the forest–savanna mosaic or further south in the dry season and moving north after the first rains to breed. Food: congregates at alate termite or ant swarms in June and in larger groups at fires during the dry season in the Bénoué Valley. Seen with an Agama *Agama agama* near Mora on 13 January 2008 and with a lizard on 25 July 2008 in Kalfou FR.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*
At least 370 observations of this, the second-commonest Palearctic migrant, with a mean dry-season abundance of 9.3 birds / 100 km in the inundation zone. First arrival on 11 October 2008; latest date: 21 April 2007 (two). Relative abundance in the inundation zone: 0.6 birds / 100 km in October, 9.4 in November, 9.9 in December, 10.5 in January, 8.1 in February, 7.0 in March and 2.7 in April. The commonest Palearctic migrant in the Sudan zone during the dry season (3.9 birds / 100 km), and in the Bénoué Valley south to Ngaoundéré. Often seen hunting over rocky outcrops (where abundant reptiles, francolins, doves etc.), near villages (pigeons, lizards, poultry, rodents) and at waterholes (birds); numbers relatively high in rice fields in the inundation zone (Buij & Croes 2013), where observed catching rodents (*Arvicanthis*, *Mastomys* spp.) seven times (Fig. 21), typically by hanging into the wind and dropping down in a (staggered) stoop or shallow dive on closed wings. One caught a chicken south of Waza, with another two unsuccessful attempts observed on poultry near villages, in January–March. Thiollay (2001) recorded a significantly higher abundance in northern Cameroon in 2000 compared to 1973. Once recorded during the Palearctic summer, on 21 June 1994 (Scholte *et al.* 1999).

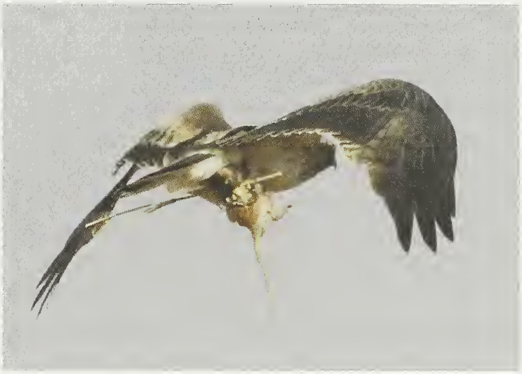


Figure 21. Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* with rodent, south of Waza National Park, Cameroon, 15 January 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle botté *Hieraaetus pennatus* avec un rongeur, au sud du Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 15 janvier 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Ayres's Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*
Partial migrant. Fifty individuals recorded; no dark morphs. Two to three pairs in the Bénoué Valley and the Mandara Mountains. Compared to other Afrotropical eagles, a relatively large proportion was seen outside national parks (Fig. 6). In the dry season, records in October (one), November (three), December (three), January (two), March (three) and April (two), near Bouba Ndjida NP, Poli, Tchollíré and in the Mandara Mountains. More common and widespread during the rains (6 May–1 September; 36 individuals): in the surroundings of Garoua (14), the Mandara Mountains (seven) and the Bénoué Valley (eight), with singles in Waza NP on 20 June, 22 July and 27 July 2010 (first published records this far north), near Maroua on 24 July 2010, near Kaélé on 31 July 2008, Moutourwa on 1 September

2008, and 10 km north of Ngaoundéré on 27 July 2007. Of birds of known age, 17 were adults and eight juveniles / immatures. The presence of adults in the inundation zone during the rains suggests that birds from the forest zone, where the species is fairly common and probably under-recorded (Clark 1999), move north with the rains in the non-breeding season. Often seen hunting over farmland, villages and deforested hillsides, also large towns (e.g. Garoua, Figuil); an adult was captured in a village north-east of Garoua and brought to Garoua Zoo where it later died (collection Ecole de Faune, Garoua). One subadult attempted to capture feral pigeons *Columba livia* in a small village north of Garoua on 24 June 2007 (Fig. 22) and an adult stooped at a group of six domestic pigeons in a village north-west of Tchollirè on 28 December 2008. An adult stooped at unseen prey in *Acacia* woodland of Waza NP in July 2010 (Fig. 23). Another adult stooped at a group of 12 Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* in the Mandara Mountains and was subsequently harassed by a Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex* and a Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* on 19 June 2008. Primary moult in three adults in the north in June–August.

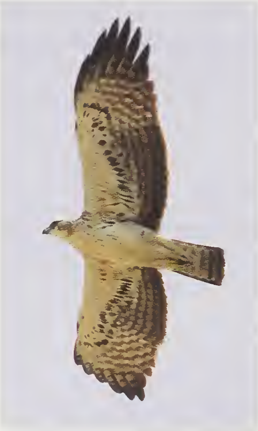


Figure 22 (left). Second-year Ayres's Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*, north of Garoua, Cameroon, 24 June 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle d'Ayres *Hieraaetus ayresii* de deuxième année, au nord de Garoua, Cameroun, 24 juin 2007 (Ralph Buij)

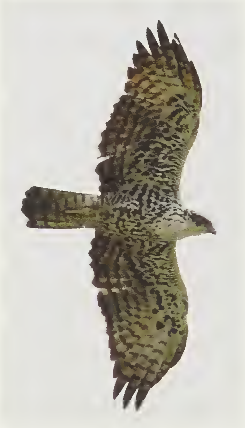


Figure 23 (right). Adult Ayres's Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 25 July 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Aigle d'Ayres *Hieraaetus ayresii* adulte, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 25 juillet 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*
Sedentary. Recorded throughout but most frequently in the Bénoué Valley (0.8 birds / 100 km), where more commonly detected (more vocal, also in flight) during the rains, perched in dense woodland or in cultivated fields, or circling high. Two in the Mandara Mountains and one circling near Yagoua. First records in the Waza-Logone area: singles on 23 December 2006, 2 March 2007, 24 November 2009 and 14 May 2010, perched in *Sclerocarya* woodland of Waza NP and once drinking at Louloumbaya waterhole. One near Mora on 22 March 1990 (Robertson 1992).

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*
Sedentary. Throughout the region, commonest in the inundation zone (mean 12.9 birds / 100 km) and declining southwards (mean 2.3 birds / 100 km in the Bénoué Valley). Highest densities occur on raised areas with *Faidherbia albida*, *Hyphaene thebaica* and *Borassus aethiopum* trees surrounded by seasonally flooded grasslands along the Logone River (Buij & Croes 2013), but also frequently seen over rice fields and dry *Sclerocarya* and *Acacia* woodlands to the south and west. Adult males in dry woodlands had mean dry-season ranges of 1.5 km^2 (range: 0.57–2.52 km^2; significantly larger outside than in Waza NP: Buij 2013), but evidence suggests that range size is much larger in the less productive wooded grasslands of the higher Sudan zone (*c.*7 km^2 for a male south of Mora: unpubl. data). Nest building and courtship feeding of female by male from February / March in the Far North Region, vocal in early morning hours in January–April. Fledgling near nest on 2 May 2009 in Waza NP, a nest with one nestling of *c.*2 weeks on 8 May 2009, four nests with one egg each on 7–13 May 2010, and two nests with one nestling (1–2 weeks) on 17 May 2010 (*contra* Scholte *et al.* 1999, who assumed breeding during August–November). Dependent fledglings (food begging) until mid August in the inundation zone. Nest trees: *Balanites aegyptiaca* (six nests), *Faidherbia albida* (three) and *Sclerocarya birrea* (two). Food in the Far North Region mainly reptiles (lizards, some snakes) and rodents, few birds and insects (Buij 2013). Parasitic attacks noted by adults on Black-winged Kites and Booted Eagles with rodent and bird prey. Mean weight of 17 males 553 ± 26 g (range: 518–612 g) and of 12 females 660 ± 55 g (587–767 g). Declined 62%

in 1973–2000 in northern Cameroon (Thiollay 2001), possibly due to increased nest disturbance and declining vegetation cover and prey biomass in unprotected areas (Buij 2013).

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*
Sedentary. Commonest in the inundation zone (3.8 birds / 100 km) and especially associated with seasonally flooded plains along the Logone (Buij & Croes 2013), with smaller numbers further south (0.7 birds / 100 km in the Bénoué Valley). Dark and grey morphs recorded throughout. On average one occupied nest per 5 km^2 in the protected and cultivated woodlands in and around Waza NP (40 km^2), April–July 2010. Also breeds in the centre of villages (nests recorded in Maroua, Rhumsiki and Kousseri). An adult observed catching a young domestic chicken *Gallus gallus* in a village south of Mora, in January 2008. Nestlings at three nests (Fig. 24), and two nests with eggs (1–3), in *Sclerocarya birrea* trees in and south of Waza NP, in May 2009 and 2010, and begging juveniles in Kousseri in June. Congregates at waterholes in Waza in the dry season, where it is one of the commonest raptors (up to seven together), drinking, and two to three simultaneously chasing Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* flocks.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
Commonest Palearctic raptor, noted in all months except July–August with a mean dry-season abundance of 23 birds / 100 km in the inundation zone, but far less numerous in the drier Sudan zone and Bénoué Valley (0.4 and 0.6 birds / 100 km, respectively). Together with Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* exceptionally stable in terms of abundance in Sudan and Sahel zones of central West Africa and northern Cameroon in 1969–2004 (Thiollay 2001, 2006). Exploits moist or shallowly flooded grasslands in September–November, but thereafter fires, grazing and retreating floods concentrate food resources, for example near water or in crops (e.g. rice; Buij *et al.* 2012) and numbers shift in response to spatio-temporal variations in food availability (Buij & Croes 2013). Common from 15 September, when 22 birds / 100 km in moist, partially cultivated grasslands south of Kousseri (southernmost record: 15 September 2009, five at 11°84'N 14°61'E), 99 birds / 100 km in October, declining to 37 birds / 100 km in November and 7–11 birds / 100 km in December–March. From November, with drying of grasslands and increasing fires, Western Marsh Harriers exploit crop fields and rich grasslands of the seasonally inundated floodplain along the Logone River, and the margins of wet depressions and Lake Maga, where they feed primarily on diurnal rodents, but also on grasshoppers, reptiles and birds (Buij *et al.* 2012). Over the course of the dry season, more strongly associated with extensive rice cultivation than grassland habitats in the Waza-Logone floodplain (Buij & Croes 2013), but also frequents drier habitats away from it. Observed hunting frogs in October–November and scavenging dead fish twice in the late dry season. Apart from small passerines (notably Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*), avian prey included a Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and adult male Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, with failed attempts to predate Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* and White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* observed. Of 804 individuals aged and / or sexed in the Waza-Logone area in January–March 2009–10, 21% were adult males, 27% adult females and 52% juveniles. Late records: juvenile / female high over Maroua on 30 May 2010, two juveniles quartering rice fields near Maga on 2 June 2007, and two juveniles near Kousseri on 12 June 2008. Last record of an adult male was 17 March 2010, near Maga, but adult males do over-summer in the Sahel (Thiollay 1977).

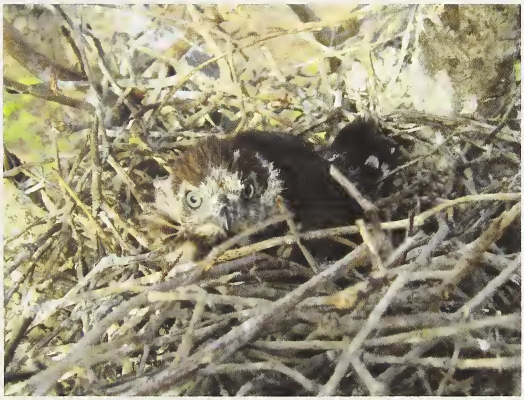


Figure 24. Nestling Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 10 May 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Jeune Autour Gabar *Micronisus gabar* au nid, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 10 mai 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus NT*
The least common Palearctic harrier in October–April in the inundation zone, where mean 3.2 birds / 100 km, but also further south. Southernmost record: south of Mbe (07°48'N 13°33'E), 7 March 2008. Earliest and latest records of juveniles: 10 October 2008, near Maroua, and 14 April 2007, Waza NP. Earliest and latest records of adult females: 16 November 2008, near Moutourwa, and 5 April 2006, Waza NP; and of adult males: 12 October 2008, near Mora, and 17 March 2008, Waza NP. First arrival reported by Scholte *et al.* (1999) on 18 September 1994. Of 564 birds aged and / or sexed in 2005–10, 25% were adult (> second-year) females, 21% adult males and 54% juveniles. Juveniles dominate winter populations in early and late dry season (Fig. 25a). Of those juveniles sexed (*n* = 112), 53% were females and 47% males. Rice fields with abundant rodents are an important foraging habitat in November–April (Buij & Croes 2013) and the species is relatively more frequent in dry grasslands than other harriers (Buij *et al.* 2012). Detailed observations in January–March revealed that adult males foraged more frequently over seasonally flooded grasslands than dry rice fields, whereas adult females not only foraged more often but also for longer periods over rice than flooded grasslands, probably reflecting intersexual dietary differences (Buij *et al.* 2012). Food: grasshoppers (on freshly burnt grasslands) and birds (more frequently targeted by males: Buij 2012), including Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*, also reptiles, but biomass dominated by rodents (Buij *et al.* 2012). No significant decline in northern Cameroon in 1973–2000 (Thiollay 2001), but few seen in both periods (16 and 11 individuals, respectively), making trends difficult to evaluate and decline was noted further west (Thiollay 2006). Previously reported rarity in comparison to Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* (which see) suggests that numbers may have been under-estimated due to identification difficulties and, possibly, lower detectability of Pallid Harrier, which often hunts closer to the ground, sometimes in ditches (rice fields) or through denser vegetation (pers. obs.) than Montagu's Harrier.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*
Palearctic migrant, October–April. More common than Pallid Harrier, with mean 5.2 birds / 100 km in the inundation zone, where abundance along transects: 0.2 birds / 100 km in October, 2.7 in November, 1.8 in December, 10.0 in January, 8.4 in February, 4.7 in March and none in April. One satellite-tracked adult female from Belarus frequented the inundation area in December (arrival: 10–12th) to February 2007/08, 21–29 November 2008 and December (arrival: 4th) to February 2009/10, but not in 2010/11 (Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation unpubl.). Numbers four times greater than *C. macrourus* (65 vs. 16) along road transects in northern Cameroon in the 1970s (Thiollay 2001). However, *C. pygargus* comprised 59% of combined numbers in northern Nigeria in 1968–73 (Thiollay 1977),

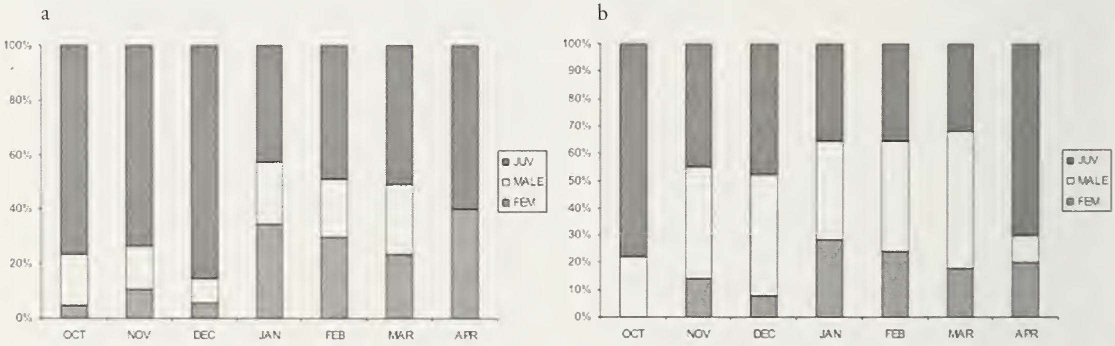


Figure 25. Age and sex composition of (a) Pallid *Circus macrourus* (*n* = 564 birds) and (b) Montagu's Harriers *C. pygargus* (*n* = 805) wintering in northern Cameroon in October–April. Birds were recorded throughout the study area in 2005–10.

Composition par âge et sexe des (a) Busards pâles *Circus macrourus* (*n* = 564 individus) et (b) Busards cendrés *C. pygargus* (*n* = 805) hivernant au nord du Cameroun en octobre–avril. Les oiseaux ont été recensés sur toute la zone d'étude en 2005–10.

which is comparable to the proportion along road transects in northern Cameroon in 2007–10 (67% *pygargus*; *n* = 168). Other reports from Waza NP probably over-estimated relative abundance of *pygargus*: up to 15 daily vs. only two *macrourus* in December 1990 (Robertson 1992) and 20 daily vs. four *macrourus* in November 1993 (Sørensen *et al.* 1996). Southernmost record: juvenile on 24 December 2008 south of Mbe (07°49'N). Of 808 birds aged and / or sexed in 2005–10, 20% were adult females, 42% adult males and 38% juveniles; males consistently commoner than females throughout the dry season (Fig. 25b). Of those juveniles sexed (*n* = 153), 52% were males and 48% females. Pellet analysis reveals that prey comprises mainly grasshoppers, but also reptiles, birds and rodents (Buij *et al.* 2012). First arrival of juveniles: 11 October 2008, Waza NP (one). Latest dates for juveniles (all single males): 6 May 2007 and 25 May 2009, Waza NP, and 30 May 2010, near Maroua. Earliest and latest records of adults: females on 15 November 2007, Waza NP, and 15 April 2007, near Maroua; males on 20 October 2007 and 2 April 2006, both in Waza NP. No wet-season records though known to over-summer (Thiollay 1977). West African floodplains are important wintering grounds (Thiollay 1977), and females are attracted to dry rice fields but embankment of the Logone River has probably negatively impacted foraging conditions especially for males (Buij *et al.* 2012). Abundance in 1973–2000 similar (Thiollay 2001), but declined further west during approximately same period (Thiollay 2006).

Shikra *Accipiter badius*
Intra-African migrant. Observed year-round at all latitudes but movements probably most evident north and south of the study area (Elgood *et al.* 1973, Thiollay 1978b). Commonest in the Bénoué Valley, where mean dry-season abundance 2.4 birds / 100 km, and in wet season 2.1 birds / 100 km. More commonly seen during rains (May–August) in the inundation zone (wet-season abundance: 0.6 birds / 100 km, dry season: 0.3 birds / 100 km) and Sudan zone (1.0 bird / 100 km vs. 0.3 birds / 100 km in dry season), indicating an influx from the south. Breeds in the Bénoué Valley during the dry season, where courtship, mating and three nests with one, two and two eggs, respectively, in January–February. Also breeds in May–July in the Far North Region, where fledglings recorded in July–August. Five nests in the centre of large towns (e.g. Maroua) during the rains. These observations support the theory that the region's Shikras have an extended breeding season covering both seasons (Elgood *et al.* 1973): some move north with the rains and breed when the rains start in the north, whereas others breed at more southerly latitudes in the dry season. Individuals caught agamas and skinks on and near houses in Maroua, Figuil and Waza. Adults and juveniles seen foraging together on alate termites, ants and grasshoppers in June–July in the Far North Region.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*
Rare Palearctic migrant. Two adult females, circling near Poli and over Bénoué NP on 14 and 15 April 2010, were identified by their dark brown upperparts, densely barred rusty brown underparts including lower belly (darker than Shikra), rather narrow 'arm' and pointed 'hand' compared to Shikra, with dark cheeks and dark iris of one female seen clearly. A juvenile near Guider on 23 April 2010 and another at the entrance to Bouba Ndjida NP on 17 April 2010 were also tentatively identified as this species. A male claimed from Waza NP in October 1992 (Skeen 1993) and another tentatively identified there in January / February 2000 (Thiollay 2001). Other published records in the region: Niger, 19 February and 27 May (Thiollay 1977).

Red-thighed Sparrowhawk *Accipiter erythropus*
Rare sedentary *Accipiter*. One seen at close range in typical *Accipiter*-like flight 5 m above the ground, on 27 December 2008 in open woodland near a large seasonal river within Bouba Ndjida NP. Northernmost record in Cameroon, the nearest being from the Bamenda Highlands (Louette 1981), but reported to nearly 10°N in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994). In Ghana occurs in the forest zone but is especially well represented in the forest / savanna transition zone, north to 08°–08°30'N, mainly in riparian forest (F. Dowsett-Lemaire *in litt.* 2013).

Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*
Probably sedentary. Five adults seen, all in the Bénoué Valley in February–June, coinciding with the breeding season (Mills *et al.* 2003) when the

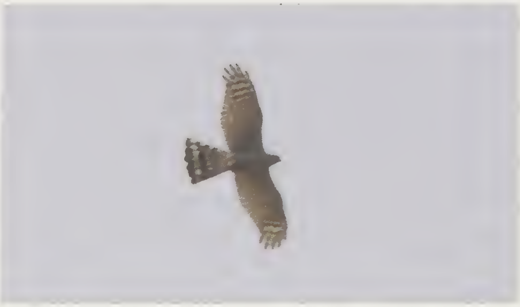


Figure 26. Adult Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis* circling with prey, near Poli, Cameroon, 8 March 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Épervier de l'Ovampo *Accipiter ovampensis* avec une proie près de Poli, Cameroun, 8 mars 2008 (Ralph Buij)

species is perhaps more conspicuous. Records as follows: one drinking in the Bénoué River on 14 February 2007; one circling over savanna woodland near Tchollíré on 13 May 2007; a dark morph *c*.60 km south of Banda on 7 March 2008 (catching a swallow *Hirundo* sp. and subsequently harassed by a Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex*); one in flight with prey east of Poli on 8 March 2008 (indicative of breeding; Fig. 26); and one *c*.30 km north of Banda on 24 June 2008. Previous records include a pair nest building in Bénoué NP in March 2003 (Mills *et al.* 2003), and a specimen from Poli, dated September 1936 (Louette 1981). Records considered doubtful by us include one in Kalamaloué NP in April–May 1992 (Scholte *et al.* 1999) and two near Yagoua in 2000 (Thiollay 2001).

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

Sedentary. Most frequent along large rivers in the Bénoué Valley, where mean 0.3 birds / 100 km along road transects under-estimates abundance along rivers; a nest was occupied during the dry season in 2008–10 near the Bénoué River *c*.30 km north-west of Tchollíré. Most records in the Far North Region were inside Waza NP, where two pairs were attending nests in December–May and juveniles and subadults were present in April–June 2007–09. Subadult and juvenile near Kousseri and Double (July), probably reflecting dispersal from Waza NP, and an adult near Maga (December), but relatively few outside national parks (Fig. 6). A lack of large trees may explain its rarity near Lake Maga (Thiollay 2001). Has declined significantly outside protected areas in the Sudan and Sahel zones of central West Africa since the 1970s (Thiollay 2006), when declines were already apparent (Thiollay 1977). Thiollay (2001) observed 48 individuals on 466 km of road transects, i.e. 10.3 birds / 100 km, in northern Cameroon's inundation zone (Waza NP, Mora-Waza, Pousse-Yagoua) during the dry season of 1973 vs. a dry-season abundance of 1.0 bird / 100 km in the same area in 2000 (January–February); abundance on the same transects in 2007–08 (January–February) was 1.6 birds / 100 km, suggesting numbers remained stable in 2000–08 but at a much lower level compared to 1973. Throughout, but notably also within Waza NP, pairs are under threat from overfishing of waterholes by local communities, as well as increased disturbance at nest sites and contamination of water sources (*cf.* African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Common to locally abundant intra-Africa migrant (*M. m. parasitus*, Yellow-billed Kite), throughout the Far North Region but south of Garoua only in small numbers in cultivated habitats, villages and towns (e.g. Ngaoundéré). Although it remains common today, a significant decline was noted between 1973 and 2000 in northern Cameroon (Thiollay 2001). A small number of Palearctic Black Kites (nominate *migrans*, <1% of total numbers) was identified, November–April, mostly in the inundation zone; possibly under-recorded due to difficulties in distinguishing between races. Relative abundance highest during the dry season in the inundation zone, when 108 birds / 100 km, but a mean 43 birds / 100 km in the wet season, when most abundant on the partially flooded grasslands north of Waza NP (166–386 birds / 100 km in July–September between Waza and Kousseri). During the dry and early wet season (October–July), which coincides with the breeding season in the inundation zone, more commonly associated with dry, protected woodlands, with sufficient nest-site availability, than cultivated grasslands, rice crops or flooded grasslands (Buij & Croes 2013), although large groups of non-breeders may forage over burnt rice fields and floodplains. Few remain in the Sudan zone in August–September, and the Bénoué Valley is completely vacated in May–September, indicating northwards movement with the rains into the Sahel as previously described (Elgood *et al.* 1973, Thiollay 1977). Two large roosts with several hundred birds each in Waza NP and north of Lake Maga, December–February, and 2–5 roosts with several tens north of Waza in August–September. Exploits alate termites and ants in foraging groups of 200–300 birds at the start of the rains in May–June in the inundation zone, insects and small vertebrates in October–January at fires, meat scraps at slaughterhouses (Mokolo, Maroua, Ngaoundéré, Garoua) and fish remains at markets (Maga). Breeds in dry woodlands within and (less commonly) around Waza NP in March–July (one occupied nest per 6.7 km^2 in 2009/10), but breeding may start earlier; one nest with two eggs on 2 May 2009 in Waza NP, another with two eggs there on 27 May 2010 and two nests with one 4–5 week old-nestling each, 10 and 20 May 2009. Nests were lined with plastic bags, cloth and pieces of dry livestock skin.

Grasshopper Buzzard *Butastur rufipennis*
Intra-African migrant, between *c.*08°30 and 12°N (Thiollay 1977). Commonest raptor in northern Cameroon after Black Kite and Hooded Vulture (Buij *et al.* 2013b), with 29.6 birds / 100 km in the dry season and 56.4 birds / 100 km during the rains in the inundation zone, where it comprises 9% and 24% of the raptors in the dry and wet seasons, respectively (Buij *et al.* 2013b). Vacates the Bénoué Valley from April (dry-season abundance: 15.3 birds / 100 km), although some linger until June, when five were observed; none in July, when the entire population has moved north. Breeds in high densities at the start of the rains, in April–July, in *Sclerocarya birrea* woodland inside (mean nest density: 3.3 nests / km^2) and around Waza NP (2.4 nests / km^2; Buij *et al.* 2013e); between October–July, more strongly associated with dry woodlands inside and outside Waza NP than flooded grasslands or rice fields (Buij & Croes 2013), because nest site and terrestrial prey availability are comparatively high in woodlands. Soon after breeding, the entire population moves north into the Sahel (July–September). Returns south in October–November with decreasing vegetation cover due to fires and grazing, which improves prey accessibility (Thiollay & Clobert 1990), south to the forest zone, but observed in the inundation zone until January. Feeds on reptiles, insects, rodents, birds, amphibians and arachnids during the breeding season (Buij *et al.* 2013d). Insects comprise mainly (large) grasshoppers: of 118 pellets examined, 25% contained remains of large-bodied bird locusts *Ornithacris cavroisi*. Non-breeding diet consists mainly of grasshoppers, alate termites and other insects, with one carrying a lizard on 2 May 2008 in Bénoué NP. Nest success at a sample of 244 nests in 2009–10 was comparable between woodlands of Waza NP and surrounding cultivated dry woodlands, suggesting Grasshopper Buzzards cope well with habitat modification (Buij *et al.* 2013e). However, loss of tree and grass cover in important breeding areas, possibly in addition to changing rainfall patterns, may threaten future productivity, and nestling condition is negatively affected by anthropogenic land use (Buij *et al.* 2013d). During the non-breeding season, appears to benefit from disturbance regimes (cultivation, fires, grass-cutting) that improve prey availability. Inner primary moult in breeding adult females noted in June–July, in males probably later, indicating that birds shed flight feathers during migration.

Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis*
Intra-African migrant. Breeds during the dry season in the Bénoué Valley (2.5 birds / 100 km) and Sudan zones (1.1 birds / 100 km), often in well-wooded areas, on rocky hills but also in woodland on undulating hills (Bénoué NP). Entire population moves north with the rains, when the highest mean abundance is in the Sudan zone (4.3 birds / 100 km). During this influx, abundance increases in the inundation zone from 0.4 birds / 100 km in the dry season (none in January–April) to 1.4 birds / 100 km in the wet season, north to Kousseri, with numbers peaking in June–September (majority juveniles / subadults). None in the Bénoué Valley in July–September. These movements north with the rains are similar to those previously described from Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1973). Diet in the inundation zone lizards, rodents, eggs (e.g. of Grasshopper Buzzard: Buij *et al.* 2013e), nestlings and wild figs. Juveniles moulting inner primaries and rectrices in April.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
Rare Palearctic migrant. Singles of race *vulpinus* between Waza and Kousseri on 23 December

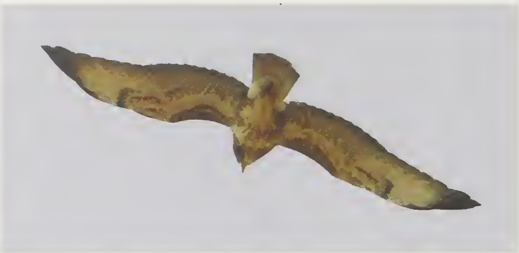


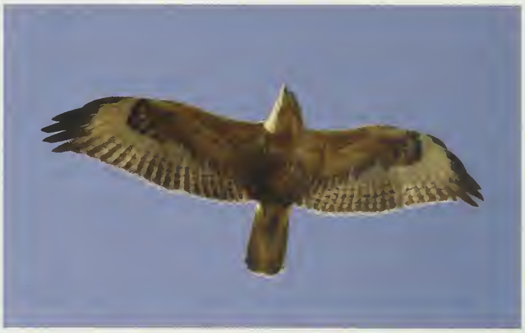
Figure 27. Juvenile Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 17 October 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Buse variable *Buteo buteo vulpinus* juvénile, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 17 octobre 2010 (Ralph Buij)

2007 (not aged) and 10 October 2008 (juvenile), and a juvenile flew over a rocky outcrop just west of Waza village on 17 October 2010 (Fig. 27). Finely barred whitish secondaries and rufous body and tail in two birds; juveniles have indistinct dark trailing edge to wings. Smaller than Long-legged Buzzard *B. rufinus*, with more rapid flight action, relatively thickset body and shorter wings, lacking the contrasting dark carpal patch of most adult Long-legged Buzzards. Claimed on at least three previous occasions in Cameroon (Holyoak & Seddon 1990, Slabbekoorn & Ellers 1999, Bobo & Languy 2000), but none documented.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Regular Palearctic migrant to the Waza-Logone floodplains, November–April, south to Maroua. Twenty to 30 records each dry season, most in rice fields near Maga (Buij & Croes 2013), where up to five within 2-km^2 area in December–March (Fig. 28), catching rodents on at least four occasions. At least three dark morphs characteristic of *B. r. rufinus* observed near Maga. One photographed and individually recognisable adult returned three consecutive winters (2008–10) to an area of sorghum cultivation east of Maroua (Fig. 29), where it hunted rodents (two captures seen) and grasshoppers, often from electricity pylons (earliest and latest dates: 9 November, 2 April). Latest records: one on 20 April 2008 in Waza NP and another on 14 April 2006 just north of Maroua. Previously recorded in the inundation zone by Thiollay in 1973 (11 individuals) and 2000 (seven, three near Maga; Thiollay 2001), but only five in total in the 1990s (Sørensen *et al.* 1996, Scholte *et al.* 1999) suggest it may have been overlooked; also a frequent migrant further north in the Lake Chad Basin (Gustafsson *et al.* 2003).



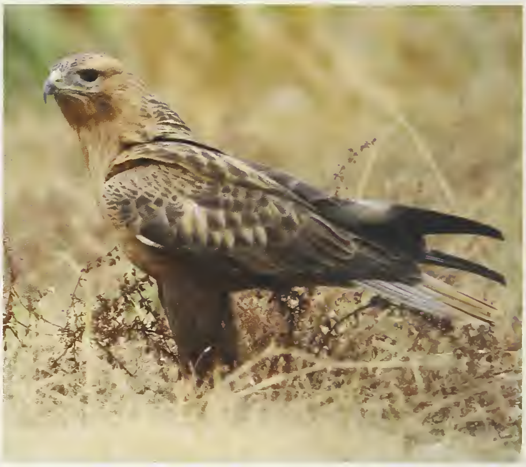


Figure 28 (top). Juvenile Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*, Maga, Cameroon, 25 December 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Buse féroce *Buteo rufinus* juvénile, Maga, Cameroun, 25 décembre 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 29 (bottom). Adult Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*, near Maroua, Cameroon, 9 January 2008 (Ralph Buij)

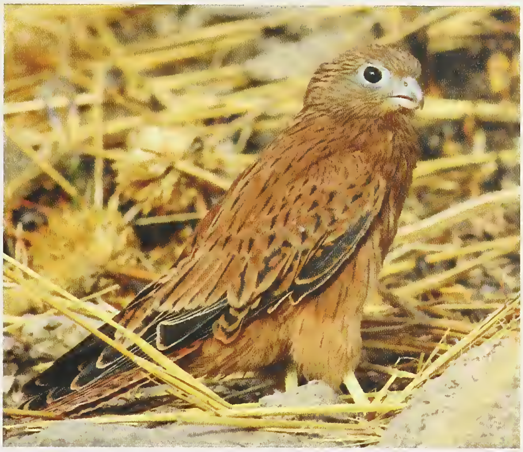
Buse féroce *Buteo rufinus* adulte, près de Maroua, Cameroun, 9 janvier 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Palearctic migrant. Thirty-one records, most in the inundation zone in and north of Waza NP in November–February. Southernmost: one on 11 November 2008 in a grassland with sorghum fields 4 km north-east of Maroua and three there on 21 November 2009. The contribution of *naumanni* to overall kestrel numbers appears to have declined in 2007–10: 9% *naumanni* vs. 91% *tinnunculus* (n = 192; Buij 2013), whereas 22.5% were *naumanni* of 80 well-identified kestrels in 1973 (Thiollay 2001). Several in January / February 2000 (Thiollay 2001), but just three published records in and around Waza NP in the 1990s, all in November–January (Sørensen *et al.* 1996, Scholte *et al.* 1999), which might also reflect identification problems. The occurrence of at least several tens in the February / April 1973 counts compared to just 31 during five years of counts suggests that the species has declined considerably in northern Cameroon. However, larger numbers have fairly recently been reported further north, e.g. 60 on 14 April 1999 near Lake Chad in north-east Nigeria (Gustafsson *et al.* 2003).

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Palearctic migrant (*F. t. tinnunculus*) and resident breeder (*F. t. rufescens*). Ten times more numerous than *F. naumanni*. Commonest in the inundation zone, where *F. t. tinnunculus* occurred at a mean abundance of 0.3 birds / 100 km in October, 4.0 in November, 5.4 in December, 7.6 in January, 7.4 in February, 6.8 in March and 1.6 in April. Thiollay (2001) recorded significantly lower kestrel numbers in January–February 2000 compared to February 1973 in northern Cameroon, but Lesser Kestrels may have comprised a large proportion of earlier counts. First recorded arrival on 11 October 2008, involving one just south of Kousseri. Palearctic birds occurred in farmland and grassland, often catching grasshoppers and drinking at Waza's waterholes in April. The resident subspecies *rufescens* (paired adults and juveniles) was recorded year-round in mountainous terrain or near isolated rocky outcrops (38 records), most commonly in higher parts of the Mandara Mountains (rocky escarpment with short grass and bushland; >900 m above sea level), where it perched on electricity poles in small villages (Rhumsiki); others south of Maroua, near Waza NP and Poli. *F. t. rufescens* was found breeding in March–June in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1973).

Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex*
Sedentary. Common in broken terrain, breeding in loose colonies in the Mandara Mountains and in isolated pairs on rocky outcrops elsewhere; also on buildings (e.g. Garoua airport). Commonest in the Sudan zone, where mean 8.4 birds / 100 km and the commonest raptor after Hooded Vulture at both seasons; less common in the Bénoué Valley south to small rocky outcrops just outside Ngaoundéré (but also recorded further south: Borrow & Demey 2001). Hunts in a variety of open habitats, including short grassland, shrubland, cultivated fields, at the edge of or in towns (e.g. Tcholliré), but not in woodland in the Bénoué Valley; never far from rocky terrain. Large groups gather in the evening near Rhumsiki to hawk insects; also in small groups hunting termite alates after rain (Fig. 31) and roosts on volcanic peaks, e.g. at least 32 in July 2009 and 43 in August 2008. In the dry season, when



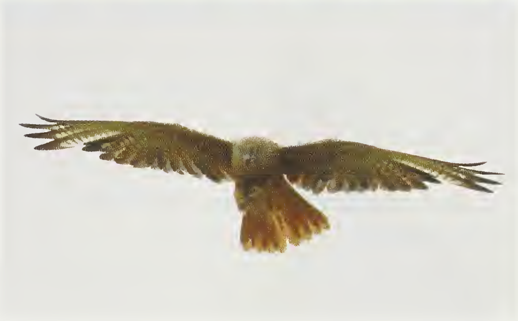


Figure 30 (top). Fledgling Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex* several hours after its first flight, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 10 June 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Jeune Crécerelle renard *Falco alopex* quelques heures après son premier vol, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 10 juin 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 31 (bottom). Adult Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex* eating termites in flight, Mandara Mountains, Cameroon, 10 July 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Crécerelle renard *Falco alopex* adulte mangeant des termites en vol, Monts Mandara, Cameroun, 10 juillet 2008 (Ralph Buij) some (probably mostly non-breeders) disperse to lower areas (*cf.* Thiollay 1978b), recorded in groups of up to 22 (more commonly <10) at fires, taking grasshoppers and other fleeing insects (a gathering of *c.*30 was observed at a small fire near Rhumsiki in February: Holmes 1972); in smaller groups near irrigated fields. Breeds in April–June, with fledglings recorded in the first half of June (Fig. 30); one pair near the entrance to Waza NP had three fledglings in 2007, 2008 and 2010, two in 2009. Adults moult remiges in June–July. Rather secretive during incubation, breeding pairs become conspicuous and vocal during the nestling phase, chasing or dive-bombing potential predators (Red-necked Buzzard, Barbary Falcon *Falco (peregrinus)pelegrinoides*, Patas Monkey *Erythrocebus patas*, Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*) near their nests (<150 m); family groups similarly noisy. Prey is caught on the ground from a perch (tree, electricity pylon, low bush), occasionally in the air or after short hover. Prey items delivered at one nest in June included grasshoppers (n = 5), agamid lizards (n = 3) and a rodent. The largest known population is in the Mandara Mountains (Thiollay 2001), where eggs or nestlings are protected by their inaccessibility; the species appears to profit from greater prey availability with human activity.

Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*
Sedentary, with seasonal dispersal. Recorded year-round throughout the study area but numbers increase about twofold during the rains, indicative of seasonal dispersal from the south, when mean 3.4 birds / 100 km in the Bénoué Valley but still just 0.4 birds / 100 km in the inundation zone. Throughout the Sudan savanna zone, most commonly in the Mandara Mountains. Occurs in a variety of habitats, often mosaics of woodland and agriculture, more frequently in cultivated fields in the north but in riverine forest or well-wooded valleys in hilly terrain in the south. An influx of juveniles apparent each year in the inundation zone in June–July, exploiting insects (termites, beetles). A juvenile returning to the same perch caught 12 large beetles in 124 minutes on 11 June 2006. Small mammals also caught: an adult with a rodent in August north of Garoua, and a pair hunting bats (two captured) at dusk in Bénoué NP. Courtship and mating observed during the dry season (February–March) in the Bénoué Valley where two pairs occupied old Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* nests at the Bénoué River.

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*
Sedentary. Found throughout, provided *Borassus* or *Hyphaene* palms are present (mostly dispersing juveniles where palms are absent, such as Waza NP), most commonly in the inundation zone, where dry-season abundance 3.2 birds / 100 km, but locally more common such as along the Logone River between Tikélé and Yagoua, where 11.1, 7.0 and 9.3 birds / 100 km, respectively, in February, May and November. However, probably under-recorded during road transects: mean one pair per 1.7–2.8 km^2 on the partially cultivated alluvial plains of the Logone, north of Lake Maga (*c.*800 km^2), in 2009–10. Also present year-round but rather local in the Bénoué Valley at 0.6 birds / 100 km and pairs at widespread locations in the Sudan savannas. Pairs at nests in palms in February–April in Bénoué NP and north of Lake Maga; one pair attacked a Barbary Falcon. Prey near Maga, where pairs hunt passerines near the Logone River, in rice fields, villages and along the shores of the lake: Red-billed Queleas (two) and a Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*. A pair hunting White-throated Bee-eaters *Merops albicollis* on 4 November 2007 near Poli, and one with a weaver *Ploceus* sp. near Tchollíré on 29 July 2009. Two juveniles in Waza NP hunting weavers and large insects above a waterhole in July 2008.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* NT
Rare Palearctic migrant (main wintering range in southern Africa: Hockey *et al.* 2005). Four seen: juvenile male between Waza NP and Kousseri on 7 May 2007, adult male there next day, juvenile between Maroua and Kaélé on 18 October 2008, and adult female drinking at waterhole in Waza NP on 23 April 2010 (Fig. 32). One record in the Waza-Logone area, on 28 September 1994 (Scholte *et al.* 1999). Further south, one at Bénoué NP on 22 March 1997 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999) and a specimen from Faro is dated 5 April (Reichenow 1911). Especially conspicuous on spring passage in West Africa (e.g. April 2011 in Benin and March–April 2010 in Ghana: F. Dowsett-Lemaire & R. J. Dowsett pers. obs.); large groups (several hundreds) have been reported from southern Cameroon (M. Languy

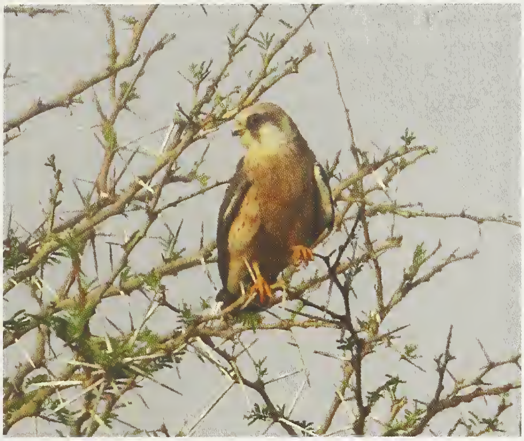


Figure 32. Adult female Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 23 April 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon kobez *Falco vespertinus*, femelle adulte, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 23 avril 2010 (Ralph Buij)

in litt. 2013) and Nigeria in April (Elgood *et al.* 1966).

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*
Rare Palearctic migrant. A pale morph hawking insects over mountains near Poli on 14 April 2010 (Fig. 33) is only the second field observation for Cameroon (the first being a dark morph briefly seen in the Mount Cameroon area in autumn 1996: Hivekovics & Palatitz 1998), although northern Cameroon is routinely crossed by migrating Eleonora's Falcons en route to their wintering grounds mainly in Madagascar (Gschweng *et al.* 2008, Lopez-Lopez *et al.* 2010).

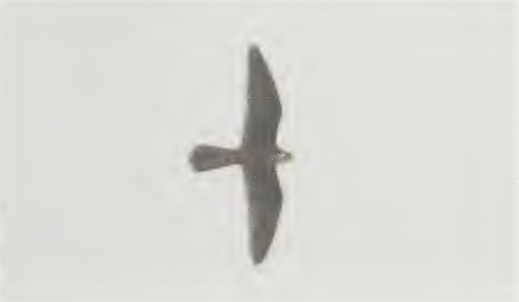


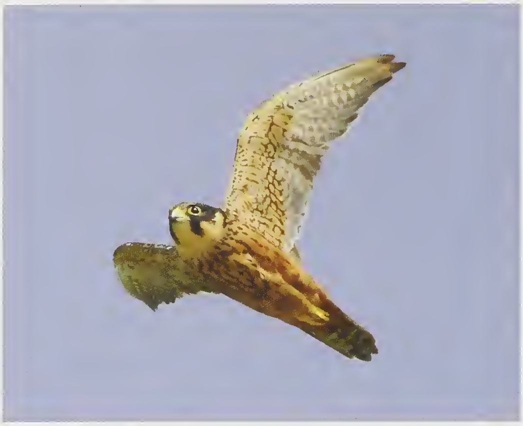
Figure 33. Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae* near Poli, Cameroon, 14 April 2010 (Ralph Buij)

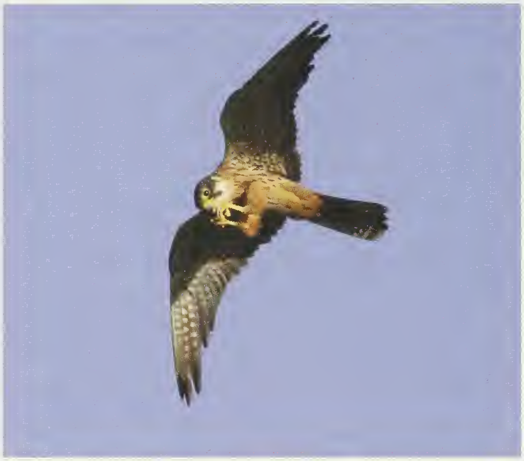
Faucon d'Éléonore *Falco eleonorae* près de Poli, Cameroun, 14 avril 2010 (Ralph Buij)

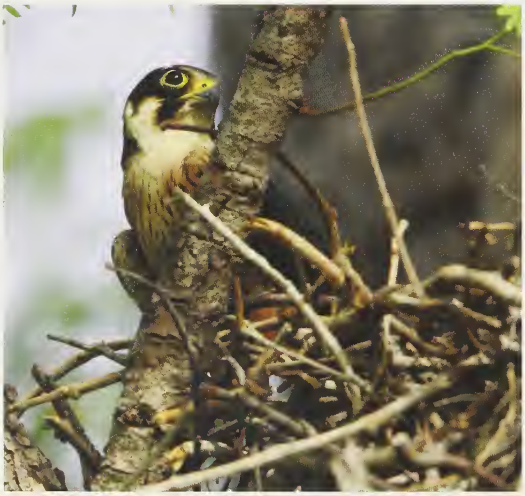
Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*
Rare Palearctic migrant. One south of Rhumsiki on 1 May 2010 (10°24'N 13°33'E), hawking insects (*cf.* Buij 2011). At least five seen, mostly above rocky outcrops, near the entrance to Waza NP (11°24'N 14°33'E) between 7 and 28 July 2010. The first published records for Cameroon, and among the few for the region.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
Uncommon Palearctic migrant. Twelve observed, in Waza NP—on 20 October 2007 (juvenile), 10 November 2007 (two adults and a juvenile) and 10 October 2008 (one)—near Rhumsiki and in and around Bouba Ndjida NP—seven between 1 and 18 April 2010, among them at least three juveniles. On three occasions Eurasian Hobbies were seen hawking dragonflies and other large insects. The only other records for northern Cameroon are an adult in February 1973 in Waza NP (Thiollay 1978a) and one in Bénoué NP on 18 March 1999 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999). The migration routes of satellite-tracked adult Eurasian Hobbies from Sweden converged near the equator south of Cameroon (Strandberg *et al.* 2009), most crossing southern Cameroon; the majority of field observations are from the forest zone in March–April, including large groups (100+ birds; M. Languy *in litt.* 2013).

African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*
Sedentary, with seasonal dispersal northward with the rains. Regularly recorded in the Far North Region during the rains and in the Bénoué Valley (where it breeds) during the dry season (all records there March–May); total of 61 records. In the north mainly in and around Waza NP (41 records), on 1 June–24 October, most in July–August. Often in loosely associated groups of 2–4, but at least 11 hawking dragonflies and other insects over rocky outcrops and surrounding plains in Waza NP on 26 July 2010. Also in the Mandara Mountains on 10–11 July 2008 at alate termite swarms (with Fox Kestrels, Hooded Vultures and Wahlberg's Eagles), three near Maroua on 10 October 2008, and one near Moutourwa on 31 August 2009. Almost all those north of the Bénoué Valley were juveniles or second-years (Figs. 34–35), but two adults tentatively identified in July 2007; most adults probably remain in the breeding areas, merely becoming more discreet during the non-







Left, top to bottom

Figure 34. Second-year African Hobby *Falco cuvierii* (note remiges of different generations and moulted central rectrices) hawking insects, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 27 August 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon de Cuvier *Falco cuvierii* de deuxième année (noter les rémiges de différentes générations et les rectrices centrales muées) chassant des insectes, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 27 août 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 35. Second-year African Hobby *Falco cuvierii* hawking insects, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 28 July 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon de Cuvier *Falco cuvierii* de deuxième année chassant des insectes, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 28 juillet 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 36. Fledgling African Hobby *Falco cuvierii* at nest near river, Bouba Ndjida National Park, Cameroon, 2 May 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Jeune Faucon de Cuvier *Falco cuvierii* au nid près d'une rivière, Parc National de Bouba Ndjida, Cameroun, 2 mai 2008 (Ralph Buij)

breeding season. Two recent fledglings returning to a nest (Fig. 36), where still fed by both adults (once an unidentified bird), on 2 May 2008, in Bouba Ndjida NP, suggest egg laying in late February / early March in the Bénoué Valley. Moulting (body and flight feathers) juveniles and second-years in July.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

Partial migrant. Evidence of northward movement into the Sahel with the start of the rains in May–June, and south in November, as reported from Nigeria westwards (Elgood *et al.* 1973, Thiollay 1977). Most common in the inundation zone, where 4.3 and 4.6 birds / 100 km during the dry and wet seasons, respectively. Peak numbers there in June and November (mostly juveniles; mean abundance both months: 7.3 birds / 100 km), and in August in the grasslands south of Kousseri (10.5 birds / 100 km), where none was seen in September–October, when migrants move north with the rains (Elgood *et al.* 1973). Mostly juveniles and subadults, which dominate migratory groups, seen foraging together (2–6 birds) in the inundation zone, May–August, for alate termites and larger insects (locusts, grasshoppers, dragonflies) often over rocky outcrops or open woodland. Larger numbers gather at fires in October–December, coinciding with southbound migration. *F. biarmicus* is more strongly associated with dry woodland than seasonally flooded grassland or cropland during the dry season (Buij & Croes 2013); few occur in rice fields. Up to three together at Waza NP's waterholes during the late dry season (March–April), where flocks of birds (weavers, doves, etc.) were hunted (one adult caught a Red-billed Quelea during ten attempted strikes on birds over period of 70 minutes, in April). Less common but still widespread in the Bénoué Valley, where mostly seen near cultivation and settlements, and none seen in August–September. Rather common in the Mandara Mountains, where several nests on cliffs and rocky outcrops, and numbers peak in November–May at 6.6 birds / 100 km, with just 0.4 birds / 100 km in August–September. Adults and juveniles were seen taking young domestic chickens three times (out of nine attempts observed), around Waza NP, near Maroua and north of Banda, and an adult hunted domestic / feral pigeons south of Garoua on 3 November 2007. One pair bred in an old Pied Crow nest on an electricity pylon near Maroua in February–May in 2007–09 (two fledglings in 2007, three in 2008, none in 2009).

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* EN

Rare Palearctic migrant. An adult on a pylon 12 km north-west of Maroua on 15 October 2006, and another in flight near Bodelaram waterhole, Waza NP, on 29 and 31 December 2006 (Fig. 37), harassed by an adult male Montagu's Harrier. The Far North Region is at the southern limit of the range of this rare migrant: three were in the Waza-Logone area in February–April 1973 (Thiollay 1978a), one in 1971 (Vielliard 1972) and three were south-west of Waza in January / February 2000 (Thiollay 2001), with one near Lake Chad in south-east Niger on 13 November 2009 (NiBiDatabase 2013).

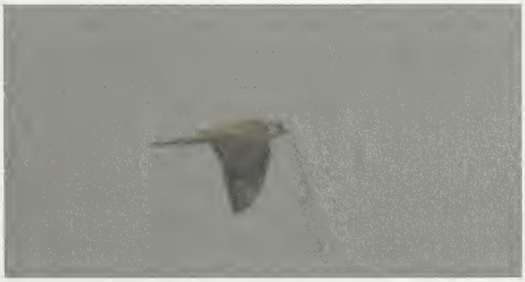


Figure 37. Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 29 December 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon sacre *Falco cherrug*, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 29 décembre 2006 (Ralph Buij)

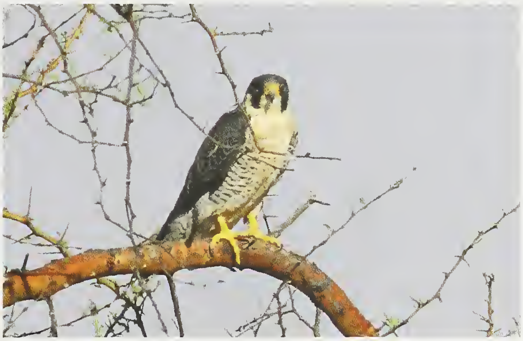


Figure 38. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus peregrinus / calidus*, Waza-Logone floodplain, Cameroon, 29 November 2008 (Ralph Buij)

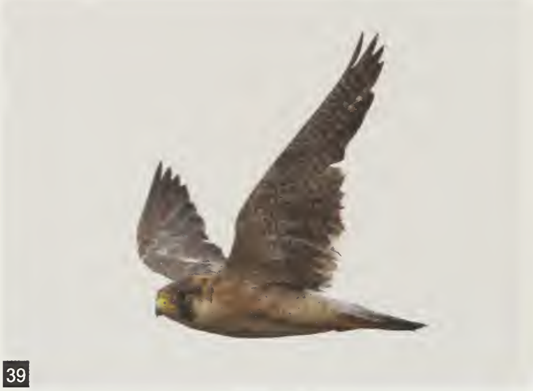
Faucon pèlerin *Falco peregrinus peregrinus / calidus*, plaine inondable de Waza-Logone, Cameroun, 29 novembre 2008 (Ralph Buij)

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

The Palearctic races *calidus / peregrinus* were identified on 29 November 2008 (Fig. 38), 1 March 2009, 1 and 8 March 2010 in the inundation zone, and near Maroua in February 2008. Twice with bird prey (once a *Streptopelia* sp.). The local race *minor* is rare in northern Cameroon: singles on 6 March 2010, in the inundation zone, and on 1 June 2009, in cultivated fields 40 km south-west of Waza NP. None in the Mandara Mountains, where sedentary pairs reported to breed (Thiollay 1978a). One identified in Bénoué NP on 4 April 1999 (N. Borrow *in litt.* to Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999).

Barbary Falcon *Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides*

More common than the few published records suggest. Generally regarded as a Palearctic migrant or vagrant (Borrow & Demey 2001), possibly from north-east Africa. Observed in the inundation zone in October–January and May–July, between 9 December 2006 and 26 July 2010. First record: adult male and female, Waza NP, 20 May 2010. Latest record: adult and juvenile, Waza NP, 17 January 2008. Most often single adults (17 records; Fig. 39), but at least two different pairs seen January, May–July and October, whereas most juveniles (n = 7) were seen in July (Fig. 40). Adults and juveniles seen together on 29–30 July 2007, 17 January 2008 and 1 July 2010, near Waza NP, but the behaviour of the juveniles suggested they were independent. An adult was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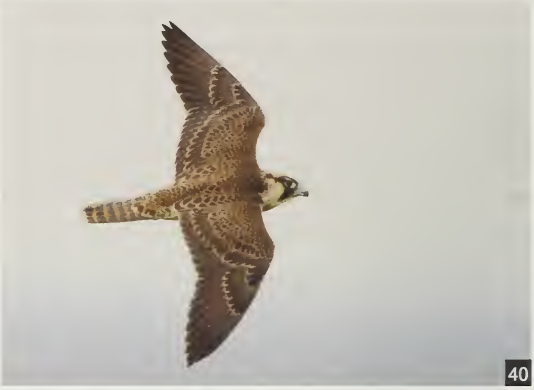
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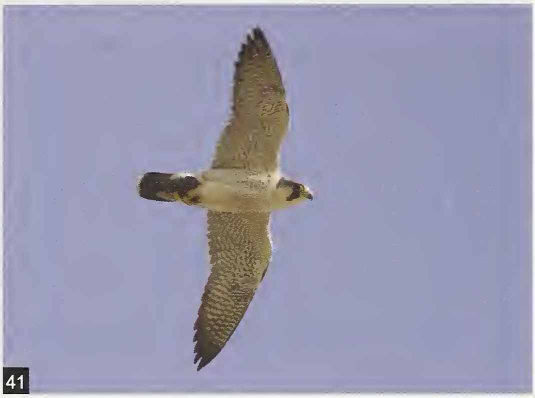
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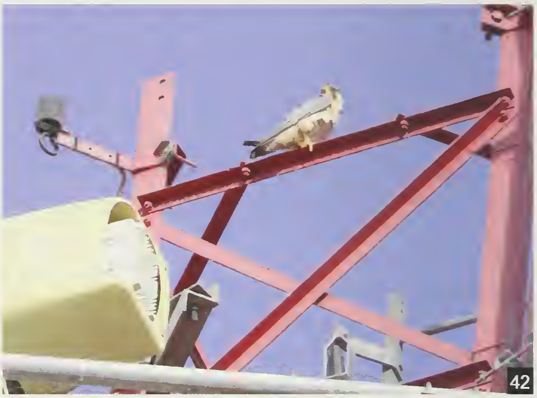
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Figure 39. Adult Barbary Falcon *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides*, Waza National Park, Cameroon, 17 June 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon de Barbarie *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* adulte, Parc National de Waza, Cameroun, 17 juin 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 40. Juvenile Barbary Falcon *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* over Waza Rock, Cameroon, 30 July 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon de Barbarie *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* juvénile au-dessus du rocher de Waza, Cameroun, 30 juillet 2007 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 41. Barbary Falcon *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* with Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis* prey, Waza Rock, Cameroon, 16 December 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon de Barbarie *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* avec une Moinelette à oreillons blancs *Eremopterix leucotis* comme proie, rocher de Waza, Cameroun, 16 décembre 2006 (Ralph Buij)

Figure 42. Male Barbary Falcon *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* (the female was perched 20 m lower), Maga, Cameroon, 25 October 2010 (Ralph Buij)

Faucon de Barbarie *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* mâle (la femelle était perchée 20 m plus bas), Maga, Cameroun, 25 octobre 2010 (Ralph Buij)

seen hunting domestic pigeons (two unsuccessful attempts over two days) from the mobile phone tower in Waza village in July 2010; the male of this pair also made an unsuccessful effort to catch a Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* in level flight on 20 May 2010. One took a Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis* in December 2006 (Fig. 41). Away from Waza NP, observed south of Kousseri on 24 November 2007 (stooping at domestic / feral pigeons in a village) and 5 January 2009, two over Maga rice fields on 27 January 2010, an adult north of Lake Maga on 8 December 2007 and a pair perched together on the mobile phone tower in Maga village on 24 October 2010 (Fig. 42). Previous records included one in Waza NP on 20 December 1990 (Robertson 1992), one in Kalamaloué NP on 21 January 1993 (Scholte *et al.* 1999) and an adult south of Waza on 17 November 1993 (Sørensen *et al.* 1996). Two adults in November 2001 near

Lake Chad in extreme north-east Nigeria (Velmala & Gustafsson 2003), *c.*190 km north-west of Kousseri and an adult flew over N'Djamena, Chad, in August 2010. Observations of paired adults with fresh juveniles and almost year-round records in dry and wet seasons might imply nearby breeding. However, pair-bonding may persist in non-breeding areas; furthermore, the lack of records of adults in the Waza-Logone area during a four-month period between 17 (or 21) January and 20 May, coinciding with the breeding period and spring migration peak further north, is more indicative of regular post-breeding dispersal to the Lake Chad Basin than of breeding (*cf.* Hogg 1983, Brouwer & Mullié 2000).

Discussion

With these observations, the list of raptors observed in northern Cameroon totals 60 species, five of which had not previously been documented in the region (African Cuckoo Hawk, Levant Sparrowhawk, Red-thighed Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard, Eleonora's Falcon). Our observations reiterate the importance of the Lake Chad Basin as a wintering area for Palearctic raptors (Thiollay 1978a), and we recorded 25 species of (partially) Palearctic origin. Steppe Eagle, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard and Barbary Falcon proved more common and regular than previously reported ('vagrants' to northern Cameroon: Borrow & Demey 2001), whereas the two spotted eagles appear to be irregular visitors to the southern inundation zone of the Lake Chad Basin. Western Marsh Harrier and, perhaps surprisingly, Booted Eagle are the most common migrants to the region. Brown (1970), who lived in neighbouring Nigeria for four years, stated that 'in Africa south of the Sahara the Booted Eagle is seldom noticed', while Thiollay (1978, 2001) saw only a handful in the inundation zone in the 1970s, but recorded three times as many Booted Eagles in 2000. Perhaps locally improved foraging conditions (expansion of rice; Buij & Croes 2013), or the increase of Booted Eagle populations in south-western Europe (they winter in Nigeria; *cf.* Chevallier *et al.* 2010) during recent decades (Mebs & Schmidt 2006), have contributed to the greater numbers wintering in the region. Palearctic falcons use the inundation zone during almost all months; while some only visit this region to refuel during short stopovers (Eurasian Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Sooty Falcon), others depend on its food resources (mainly grasshoppers and birds) over 4–8 months of their non-breeding period (Common and Lesser Kestrels, Peregrine, Barbary and Saker Falcons). Most other Palearctic migrants remain in the inundation zone in September–April (especially October–March), while others only pass through to wintering grounds further south or east (European Honey Buzzard, Common Buzzard: Thiollay 1989), and Ospreys visit in relatively small numbers compared to coastal areas (Zwarts *et al.* 2009).

The intracontinental shift in timing of the rains has important consequences for the spatial distribution of food resources for migrants (Newton 1998) and thus their occurrence in northern Cameroon. In East and southern Africa, the arrival of Palearctic migrants coincides with the rains when the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) moves south, and large- and small-bodied raptors are often seen feeding in large mixed groups on emerging termites and other wet-season-related prey outbreaks while tracking the rain fronts (Brown *et al.* 1982, Steyn 1982). In western Africa's Sudano-Sahelian savannas, however, the flush of prey associated with the northward movement of the ITCZ occurs in the boreal spring and summer (e.g. Njiforti 1997), i.e. when most Palearctic migrants are absent. Whereas many insects and breeding Red-billed Queleas are still abundant on the arrival of Palearctic migrants in September (Thiollay 1989), their abundance rapidly declines thereafter, while grasshopper abundance is highest in drier vegetation (Zwarts *et al.* 2009, Trierweiler *et al.* 2013). Consequently, those insectivorous migrants that do winter for a prolonged period in western Africa's savanna zone feed mostly on grasshoppers and, if outbreaks occur, locusts: Common and Lesser Kestrels, Black Kite and Montagu's Harrier (Zwarts *et al.* 2009, Buij *et al.* 2012). These migrants track shifting seasonal changes in grasshopper availability with decreasing green vegetation and cover southwards (Thiollay 1989, Trierweiler *et al.* 2013), most arriving in northern Cameroon's inundation zone in January. Their numbers appear to be smaller in East and southern Africa (Brown 1970, Harrison *et al.* 1997, Hockey *et al.* 2005), with the exception of Lesser Kestrel. Conversely, most Eurasian Hobbies, Eleonora's, Sooty and Red-footed Falcons migrate with the

ITCZ to their main winter ranges in southern Africa and Madagascar, gathering in numbers only where aerial insects abound after heavy rains. Recent satellite-telemetry data indicate that these insectivorous falcons regularly pass over western Africa including Cameroon (Gschweng *et al.* 2008, Strandberg *et al.* 2009, Lopez-Lopez *et al.* 2010), but probably often at such high altitudes that they go largely undetected (*cf.* Brown 1970). They are most conspicuous in western Africa on their return journey, between April and July, when they descend to lower altitudes to forage after the first seasonal rains trigger insect flushes, although Eleonora's Falcons also make substantial stopovers in autumn (Gschweng *et al.* 2008).

Apart from their predominantly easterly entry into Africa (Newton 1998), the rarity of the four Palearctic *Clanga* and *Aquila* eagles west of Cameroon may also be partially explained by the prevailing dry conditions and relative scarcity of prey during much of the winter period. Lesser Spotted Eagles, particularly, exploit high-density flushes of easily caught, rain-related prey (alate termites, locusts, frogs, Red-billed Quelea nestlings), south to southern Africa (Steyn 1982, Meyburg *et al.* 2001). To some degree, the winter distribution of Steppe Eagles may also be governed by flushes of productivity generated by rains in East and southern Africa (Brown *et al.* 1982, Steyn 1982), and large numbers of Steppe and Lesser Spotted Eagles often appear when termites emerge after rains. However, many Steppe Eagles winter in dry conditions north of the equator, where vertebrates (rodents, carrion, queleas) are the dominant food (Smeenk 1974, Clouet *et al.* 2000, Meyburg *et al.* 2003). The same is true for most Eastern Imperial and Greater Spotted Eagles (Naoroji 2006, Al Hasani *et al.* 2012), although the latter possibly consume many locusts when outbreaks occur (Brown 1970) and also migrate south of the equator (Meyburg *et al.* 1998). We did not witness any insect-hunting by *Clanga* and *Aquila* eagles in northern Cameroon, where these birds often forage alone and vertebrates (also obtained as carrion or by pirating food) appear to be the dominant food source, as in other dry areas of the winter range. Because of the low food abundance in the Sahel in the second half of the winter period, productive wetlands and especially large-scale rice cultivation with abundant diurnal rodents are particularly attractive to Steppe Eagles, in addition to Booted Eagles, Long-legged Buzzards, Western Marsh and Pallid Harriers (Thiollay 1989, Buij & Croes 2013).

During the transition period from the dry to the wet season, after the departure of most Palearctic migrants, the inundation zone acts as an important dispersal area for many Afrotropical raptors. These include intra-African migrants whose entire populations, or at least a significant proportion thereof, migrate north with the rains, which become shorter and start progressively later with increasing latitude. The timing of migrations differs between species: African Swallow-tailed Kite, Shikra, Grasshopper Buzzard and many Black Kites are already present in the inundation zone before the rains, while most Wahlberg's Eagles, Beaudouin's Snake Eagles and Red-necked Buzzards arrive after the first rains. Of these migrants, most move further north with the rains, which largely confirms the descriptions of raptor movements in neighbouring Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1973) and Chad (Salvan 1967–68), and in greater detail in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali (Thiollay 1977, 1978b). Seasonal movements are correlated with food availability, especially activity, abundance and accessibility of terrestrial prey species, which are strongly influenced by the rains, and their effect on grass cover and inundation (Thiollay 1978b). After the rains (from October), migrants gradually return to lower latitudes, where abundant food resources become available with fires, grass cutting and grazing. Few African migrants linger in the inundation zone during the first half of the dry season (Grasshopper Buzzard, non-breeding Red-necked Buzzard), or throughout it (non-breeding Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle, Shikra), but most Black Kites and African Swallow-tailed Kites remain there throughout the dry season.

In addition to intra-African migrants, other raptors in northern Cameroon display nomadic or partial movements, involving at least part of the adult population, namely Secretary-bird, Black-winged Kite, White-backed Vulture, Rüppell's Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, Tawny Eagle and Lanner Falcon, confirming previous findings further west (Elgood *et al.* 1973, Thiollay 1978b). Ayres's Eagle also appears to be a partial migrant that moves into northern Cameroon during the rains (May–September), as in Central and southern Africa, where this species also occurs in more open woodland and similarly enters densely populated areas during the non-breeding (wet) season (September–April: Steyn 1982). Large vultures wander widely (Mundy *et al.* 1992), with changes in ungulate mortality rates due to seasonal variations in rainfall perhaps triggering such movements (Kendall *et al.* 2012). This would explain the dry-season increase in numbers of Rüppell's and Lappet-faced Vultures in the inundation zone. Interestingly, Rüppell's and White-backed Vultures were recorded in larger numbers during the rains at the Bénoué Valley and Adamawa Plateau, and further studies are needed to determine the factors underlying such movements. Black-winged Kite numbers fluctuated greatly in the inundation zone, but this species appears to be resident in the Sudan zone and Bénoué Valley, probably because rodents reliably occur in cultivated areas. However, long-distance seasonal movements cannot be excluded even when local numbers are relatively stable (Steyn 1982). The Lanner Falcon influx with the rains into the inundation zone mainly comprised immatures, which were attracted to abundant insects and also invade drier areas mainly during the rains in southern (Steyn 1982, Van Zyl *et al.* 1994, Herremans & Herremans-Tonnoeyer 1996) and East Africa (Tsavo NP: Smeenk 1974), attracted by locusts, Red-billed Queleas and swarming termites. Similarly, aggregations of non-adult Tawny Eagles occur during the rains in the Kalahari (Steyn 1982) and are probably drawn from a very wide area. Although little evidence was found for partial migration or nomadic movements by African Harrier Hawk, Bateleur, Western Banded Snake Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, African Fish Eagle, Fox and Common Kestrels (local race *rufescens*), as reported further west (Thiollay 1978b), juveniles or subadults of various sedentary species also routinely dispersed to the inundation zone during the rains: Brown Snake Eagle, African Hawk Eagle, Martial Eagle, Grey Kestrel and African Hobby. This phenomenon was also reported by Thiollay (1978b) for African Harrier Hawk, Bateleur and African Hobby in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and suggests that the ephemeral food increase on the Lake Chad plains is important for the survival of dispersing young raptors.

Like seasonal displacements, the timing of breeding differs between Afrotropical raptors according to their morphological characters, corresponding accessibility of their principal prey items (Thiollay & Clobert 1990) and generally coincides with the seasonal peak thereof: many species nest during the transition period from the dry to wet season (April–July; African Swallow-tailed Kite, Lappet-faced Vulture, Gabar Goshawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Grasshopper Buzzard, Black Kite, Fox Kestrel) or the main wet season (African Cuckoo Hawk, Long-crested and Wahlberg's Eagles, Shikra). African Swallow-tailed Kite and Grasshopper Buzzard feed nestlings on a diet dominated by small terrestrial prey (Buij *et al.* 2013a,d), which is accessible and abundant at the start of the rains at this latitude, while fledglings capture nutrient-rich termites or other insects in July, and subsequently move north with the shifting ITCZ (Thiollay 1978b). The start of breeding in migrants is later with a delay in the rains, e.g. Grasshopper Buzzard breeds later at higher latitudes (Buij *et al.* 2013e), reflecting the northward movement of the ITCZ and a later peak in food abundance. Beaudouin's Snake Eagle and Red-necked Buzzard breed in more southerly woodlands during the dry season, but the protracted breeding period of Shikras encompasses dry and wet seasons at different latitudes. Finally, Wahlberg's Eagle is exceptional because it is the only migrant that breeds during the rains in the inundation zone, when non-breeding visitors from southern Africa are also present (Meyburg *et al.* 1995). In addition to the nest records reported here, and others in western Africa, Wahlberg's Eagles lay eggs at the height of the wet season north of the equator (one pair at 2,500 m in Addis Ababa: Vittery 1978), but 2–3 months before the peak rains in southern Africa (Zimbabwe: Steyn 1982; Botswana: Penry 1994; Malaŵi: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006; Zambia: Dowsett *et al.* 2008) and East Africa (Kenya: Brown 1970, Smeenk 1974). In areas north and south of the equator, nestlings apparently fledge when grass cover and prey abundance (birds, rodents, lizards) is high or even maximal after the peak in seasonal rainfall (*cf.* Thiollay 1978b).

Raptor declines

The over-riding factor currently affecting raptors in northern Cameroon is the strong human population increase, which has greatly changed landscape functioning and its capacity to support wildlife. The densely populated Sudan zone, normally the richest latitude for raptors in the region (Thiollay 1977), has an impoverished raptor community, with the exception of some species (human-commensal Hooded Vulture, Fox Kestrel) that are commonest here (Buij *et al.* 2013b). The diversity and species richness of Afrotropical raptors is highest in the Bénoué Valley, where local deforestation around the national parks has improved prey accessibility for open-country raptors (Buij *et al.* 2013b,c), including large eagles. However, the negative association of human populations with species richness illustrates that population growth is impacting resident species irrespective of advantageous changes in habitat structure (Buij *et al.* 2013c). The ecological changes following embankment of part of the Waza-Logone floodplain for rice cultivation, notably the desiccation of large parts of the formerly rich flooded grasslands and increased permanent settlement, has negatively impacted Afrotropical raptors (Thiollay 2001, Buij & Croes 2013) and insectivorous Palearctic raptors (Buij *et al.* 2012, 2013c). In general, few species appear to have benefited from the expansion of food crops, with the exception of rodent specialists such as Black-winged Kite and vertebrate-hunting Palearctic migrants such as Booted Eagle and Western Marsh Harrier (Buij *et al.* 2013c, Buij & Croes 2013). The degraded woodlands around Waza NP still provide adequate habitat for nesting migrants adapted to exploit unpredictable, seasonal and easily accessible prey, such as African Swallow-tailed Kite and Grasshopper Buzzard (Buij *et al.* 2013a,e), but nestling condition and survival may be affected by land-use change (Buij *et al.* 2013d). Contrary to migrants, sedentary generalists depend on stable prey resources within fairly small ranges, and may have suffered from a reduction of prey quality (Buij 2013). Moreover, people target raptor nests for food in the inundation zone and further south (Mandara Mountains), e.g. during the early rains when seasonal workers supplement their diet with nestlings, squirrels, hedgehogs, monitor lizards, francolins and other bushmeat (Njiforti 1997). Many keep poultry and some feral pigeons for trade, but these are regularly captured by Lanner Falcons and other raptors, and retaliatory persecution increases pressure on all nesting raptors.

Although all large raptors were also seen outside park boundaries, their richness decreases with distance to national parks (Buij *et al.* 2013c), while some (Lappet-faced Vulture, Bateleur, African Fish Eagle) appear more dependent on parks than others. A few eagles (Long-crested, Tawny and African Hawk Eagles) breed in small numbers where woodlands harbour small vertebrates (e.g. gamebirds, hyrax, squirrels) or even among cultivated fields (Wahlberg's Eagle). Others, e.g. Martial Eagle, breed in national parks, but range widely outside to hunt over cultivation, where mortality rates might be high due to persecution. Additionally, poaching reaches dramatic levels in the Far North Region, especially in Waza NP (Tumenta *et al.* 2010) and increasingly in the Bénoué Valley, where local poachers with self-made firearms and commercial (elephant) poachers from Sudan and Chad constitute a threat to small to medium-sized vertebrates and ungulate populations. The harvest of Red-billed Queleas and other passerines for consumption is widespread, in towns and villages, with slingshots (children) and guns, but frequently pesticides. Pesticides are cheaply and widely available in local markets, while their heavy use in cotton probably underlies negative associations of cotton cultivation with raptor richness and abundance in the Sudan zone (Buij *et al.* 2013c). Carbofuran and other carbamate or organophosphate insecticides (monocrotophos, profenofos, trimethacarb) and rodenticides (zinc phosphide) are used to poison wildlife for consumption (Buij & Mohamadou unpubl. data), using baits (rice, meat), but often at waterholes during the late dry season by digging small depressions close to larger waterholes; drinking mammals and birds including raptors instantly succumb. Around Waza NP, this practice has been fought by local populations after domestic animals were killed, but it remains a frequent and widespread practice. This is likely to constitute a major threat, increasingly also in the Bénoué Valley, for raptors gathering at waterholes and along seasonal rivers during the dry season: Secretary-bird, large vultures, Tawny Eagle, African Fish Eagle, Long-crested Eagle, Bateleur, African Harrier Hawk, Gabar Goshawk, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Grasshopper Buzzard, Lanner Falcon, and Palearctic Steppe Eagle, harriers and kestrels are all at risk. Pesticides are also used for fishing in the Bénoué Valley and thus contaminate waterbodies, while declining fish stocks in the Logone River, Lake Chad and dry-season waterholes inside Waza NP are intensively utilised (Scholte 2003), further weakening the prey base for African Fish Eagles and Ospreys.

Vulture decline

The disappearance of breeding colonies and comparative counts by Thiollay (2001) indicate that vultures have been relatively hardest hit, for various reasons that deviate somewhat from other raptors. First, and probably foremost, deliberate targeting of vultures to supply the traditional medicine market has become an important cause of vulture mortality in northern Cameroon since the start of the 21st century. Vulture carcasses sold on markets throughout the region are proof of large-scale persecution (Nikolaus 2001, Igoli *et al.* 2005, Soewu 2008), mainly to supply the large Nigerian traditional medicine trade. Vultures are killed by poisoning of waterholes or using other techniques, e.g. poisoned baits, shotguns and traps (Saidu & Buij 2013). All parts of vultures are used, even eggs, faeces and nests, but heads of *Gyps* and Lappet-faced Vultures are especially valued for their purported medicinal properties (Nikolaus 2011). According to local reports (Buij & Mohamadou unpubl. data), poaching of large vultures soared in the late 1990s and early 2000s; eyewitness accounts suggest dozens of vultures were killed near waterholes in and around Waza NP in the early 2000s. Hooded Vulture is now the commonest vulture sold in northern Cameroon and Nigeria (Nikolaus 2011, Ogada & Buij 2011). Lappet-faced and White-backed Vultures are probably more vulnerable to nest harvesting or disturbance by humans than Rüppell's Vulture, with most remaining nest sites being on steep, inaccessible cliffs. The disappearance of easily accessible nest sites of Rüppell's Vulture in trees and on low rocky outcrops in Waza NP in the late 1990s may be informative in this respect, as it coincided with a general increase in ungulate numbers in the area and an abundance of livestock carcasses (e.g. >1,500 cattle died during an epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease near Maga in 1997: Scholte 2005).

Apart from their use in traditional medicine, other reasons for the vulture decline may include poaching and nest disturbance in national parks, better sanitation in human settlements, more rapid disposal of carcasses, and disease. Locals in the Waza-Logone area claim that vultures are killed because they reveal the whereabouts of poached animals, particularly elephants, to wildlife officials. Nest disturbance of White-backed and Lappet-faced Vultures in Waza NP has probably increased with more frequent incursions by poachers and shepherds (Tumenta *et al.* 2010), the latter having admitted to using vulture nests to protect their livestock against stinging flies (smoke from nests set alight). With increasing numbers of sedentary farmers in the Waza-Logone area, the collection of livestock carcasses for consumption has increased during the dry season, and is common practice by villagers and game guards in the Bénoué Valley (pers. obs.; *cf.* Schoe *et al.* 2009). Although this might reduce food supplies, at present many carcasses especially in the inundation zone are left untouched, so lack of food is unlikely to cause further declines. Another potential source of concern is avian influenza virus H5N1, with reports of 45 dead or dying Hooded Vultures in February–June 2006 in Ouagadougou (Ducatez *et al.* 2007), where steep declines were noted after 2005 (P. Weesie *in litt.* 2011). The unknown cause of massive Hooded Vulture deaths in Maroua in the 1990s, where poisoning seemed unlikely (Scholte 1998), might also have been caused by disease.

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Migration of raptors across the Bab el Mandeb Strait, Djibouti, March 2013

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Migration de rapaces au-dessus du Détroit de Bab-el-Mandeb, Djibouti, mars 2013. Du 2 au 10 mars 2013, 4,562 rapaces en migration ont été recensés au-dessus du Détroit de Bab-el-Mandeb. L'Aigle botté *Hieraaetus pennatus* et le Percnoptère d'Égypte *Neophron percnopterus* étaient les espèces les plus nombreuses, représentant respectivement 53.9% et 35.5% des migrateurs identifiés. Les Percnoptères d'Égypte étaient tous des adultes, sauf trois individus estimés âgés de trois ans. La fréquence des passages était la plus élevée entre 08.00 et10.00 h et la migration visible cessait vers midi, les oiseaux volant alors plus haut et la voie de migration se déplaçant apparemment vers le sud. À cause du fait que la voie de migration semblait se déplacer au cours de la journée et que les rapaces volaient très haut, les résultats des comptages représentent des valeurs minimales. Il serait possible d'améliorer le suivi des oiseaux migrateurs à Djibouti, d'y promouvoir la protection de la nature et d'y développer l'observation des oiseaux, en particulier des rapaces.

Summary. During 2–10 March 2013, 4,562 raptors were recorded migrating across the Bab el Mandeb Strait. Booted Eagles *Hieraaetus pennatus* and Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* were the most numerous migrants, accounting for 53.9% and 35.5% of the migrants identified to species level, respectively. Among the migrating Egyptian Vultures, all were adults apart from three birds judged to be three-year olds. Migration rates were greatest during 08.00–10.00 hrs, and visible migration ceased by noon due to birds soaring higher and an apparent shift in the migration path to the south. Because the migration path appeared to move as the day passed and raptors migrated at high elevations, our counts represent minima. Opportunities exist in Djibouti to enhance monitoring of migrant soaring birds, promote conservation and develop birdwatching, especially raptor watching.

The Eurasian–East African Flyway is the second-most important flyway for migrant soaring birds in the world. Coincidental along much of the flyway's path is the Great Rift Valley, which reaches its most northerly point in Jordan, includes the Red Sea, then extends south in Africa from Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia to Mozambique. The Bab el Mandeb Strait, which separates Yemen from Djibouti, represents an important bottleneck along the route, and marks the closest point between Arabia and Africa south of Suez. Over 1.5 million soaring birds of 37 species (including five globally threatened species) move between Eurasia and Africa each year (BirdLife International 2013a), and Suez and the Bab el Mandeb are locations where the migration concentrates and large numbers of migrants can be observed. Despite its importance, the migration at the Bab el Mandeb Strait has been little studied; the majority of the available counts were made more than 20 years ago, most of them in autumn (Shirihai *et al.* 2000). These studies revealed that the Bab el Mandeb Strait is an important bottleneck site (Fishpool & Evans 2001) and that the species composition of the migration is seasonally different. More than 246,000 raptors of 28 species have been recorded crossing in a single autumn (1987), mostly Steppe Buzzards *Buteo buteo vulpinus* and Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis* (Welch & Welch 1988). In spring, past field work has been limited to just three days in a single year on the Djibouti side (Welch & Welch 1991) and four days in 1998 on the Yemen side of the strait (Welch & Welch 1999a). In both years, large numbers of Booted Eagles *Hieraaetus pennatus* and Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* predominated the count totals of raptors moving north (Welch & Welch 1991).

We studied the migration of raptors at the Bab el Mandeb during nine days in March 2013. We aimed to address some of the recommendations made in a report to IUCN and the Djibouti government (Welch & Welch 1999b), and confirm the importance of the spring migration, especially for Egyptian Vulture, a species that is currently considered globally Endangered (BirdLife International 2013b). With these data we hoped to create the early foundations for more

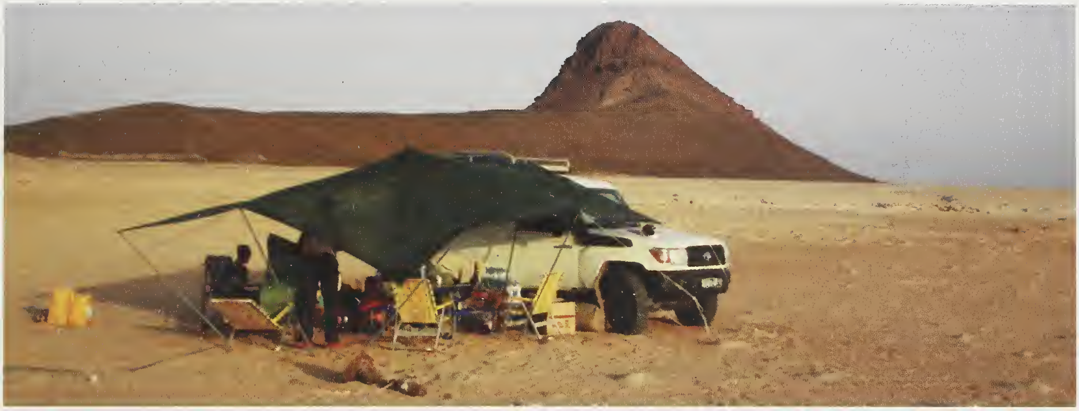

Figure 1. Ras Siyyan, a volcanic cone on the Djibouti coast, the western boundary of the Bab el Mandeb Strait (M. J. McGrady)

Ras Siyyan, un cône volcanique sur la côte de Djibouti, la limite occidentale du Détroit de Bab-el-Mandeb (M. J. McGrady)

work on the migration in Djibouti, and explore the possibility that counts at the strait may aid in monitoring the population of Egyptian Vultures that nest north of Africa and thereby support its conservation. Obviously, more information on the importance of the strait to migrants could support site protection efforts and highlight the importance of targeted conservation efforts in the area nearby.

Counts of migrating raptors in other parts of the world have been used to monitor populations (Farmer *et al.* 2007), as well as providing information useful to public conservation education efforts. Also, raptor watching (e.g. http://mnsraptorwatch.wordpress.com/sponsors-and-supporters/) and birdwatching in general (e.g. Puhakka *et al.* 2011), can provide tourism opportunities that promote conservation and provide local job opportunities.

Materials and methods

We attempted to count as many migrating raptors as possible on the Djibouti side of the Bab el Mandeb each day during 2–10 March 2013. Observations were made using 8× and 10× binoculars and 20–60× spotting telescopes. Birds were identified to species and aged whenever possible, using Porter *et al.* (1981), Clark & Schmitt (1998), Clark (1999) and Forsman (1999). HR & MM are experienced observers of raptor migration. Most of HR's experience is in Djibouti; MM has experience in Israel (particularly relevant because the species encountered there include those observed during this study), Europe, Asia, North and Central America. AD & EA were novices, but were always teamed with experienced observers during counts, in most cases teams comprised one experienced and one novice observer.

Over the course of the field work we also sought the best location for making migration observations, and thus searched for places where the migration concentrated, including points of departure (on the Djibouti coast) for migrants heading to Yemen.

During 2–5 March our counts were made from three locations near Ras Siyyan (VP1: 12°28'45"N 43°18'47"E; VP2: 12°28'34"N 43°19'04.5"E; VP3: 12°28'12"N 43°19'19"E). Ras Siyyan is a small volcanic cone located on the northern Djibouti coast (Fig. 1). It, along with six small volcanic islands, form the 'Les Sept Frères' Important Bird Area (IBA). Ras Siyyan is a distinctive landmark on the western border of the Bab el Mandeb Strait and forms that part of the Djibouti mainland closest to Yemen. During 6–10 March observers were stationed at VP2 and at 12°25'25"N 43°17'00"E (VP4) and 12°23'51"N 43°17'02"E (VP5) (see Fig. 2). The locations of VP4 and VP5 were suggested by our observations from Ras Siyyan of distant groups of raptors rising above terrain features after the migration volume at Ras Siyyan had decreased. During 6–10 March, as the volume of migration decreased during the morning, the observers quit their locations and searched as a single team for

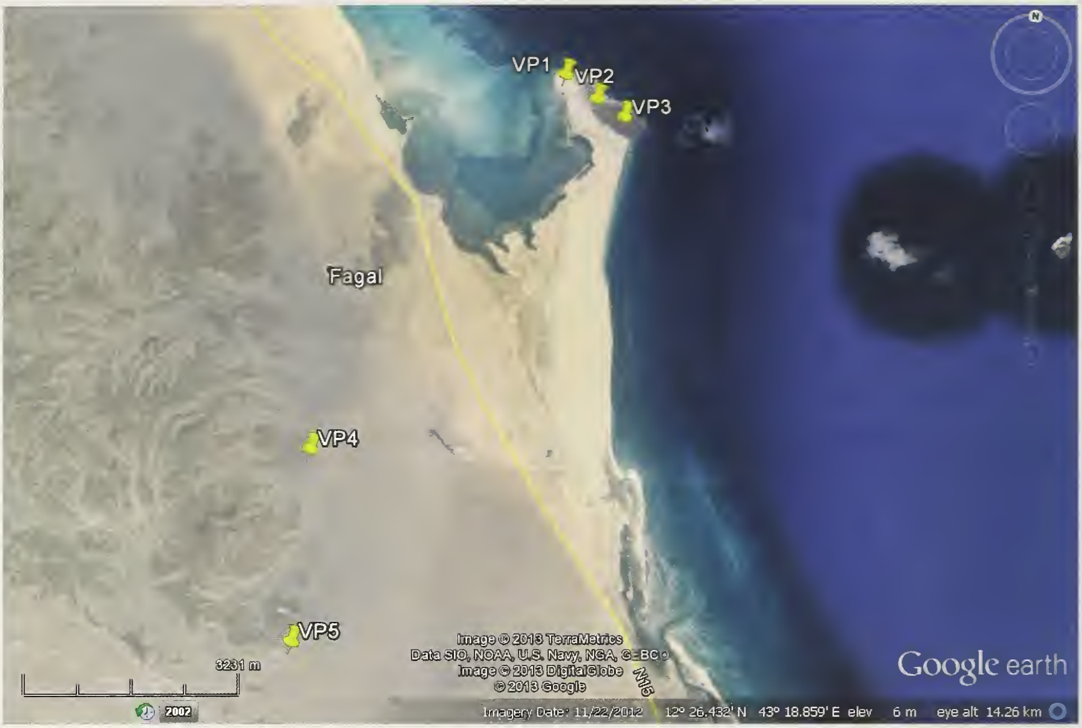
VP1
VP2
VP3
Fagal
VP4
VP5
3231 m
2002
Image © 2013 TerraMetrics
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image © 2013 DigitalGlobe
© 2013 Google
N15
Google earth
Imagery Date: 11/22/2012 12° 26.432' N 43° 18.859' E elev 6 m eye alt 14.26 km

Figure 2. Locations of vantage points from which observations were made (satellite image courtesy of Google Inc. All rights reserved © © 2013 DigitalGlobe).

Emplacement des points de vue utilisés pour les observations (image satellitaire avec la permission de Google Inc. Tous droits réservés © © 2013 DigitalGlobe).

the migration path. Searches were made south to the 'Godoria plateau', which is on the coast *c.*25 km south of Ras Siyyan and rises to *c.*250 m above sea level (Fig. 3). We also searched inland (west) from Ras Siyyan to the village of Lahasa (*c.*20 km).

Counts were recorded in time blocks (08.00–10.00, 10.01–12.00, 12.01–14.00, 14.01–16.00), and counts from different observation points were rationalised at the end of each day to ensure that double-counting was minimised. General weather conditions were recorded, including temperature, percent cloud cover, wind direction and strength (Beaufort scale).

Results

Weather

During our study, the weather was dry throughout and hot during the daytime (temperatures ranged between 20°C early in the morning to the upper 30s at midday). The wind was moderate or strong on all days, sometimes gusting, north-easterly to easterly. Clouds were high and coverage varied from <5% to 80%, but was very changeable in the strong winds. Especially during late morning, soaring birds would disappear into the high clouds, making counting difficult. At times there was haze, dust and heat shimmer that impeded making distant observations.

Numbers and composition

Formal migration watches were made for a total of 46.5 hours, and total effort was 168 man-hours. Table 1 summarises the daily counts. A total of 4,562 raptors was recorded (mean daily count = 141.3; SD=388.0). Booted Eagle and Egyptian Vulture were the most numerous species and comprised a minimum of 38.9% and 25.6% of the total, respectively. Some 27.9% of the raptors that were seen could not be identified to species level because they were too distant or visibility was not ideal. However, flight profiles suggested to us that a large percentage of these were either Booted Eagles or Egyptian Vultures. Of birds that could be identified to species, Booted Eagle and Egyptian Vulture comprised 53.9% and 35.5%

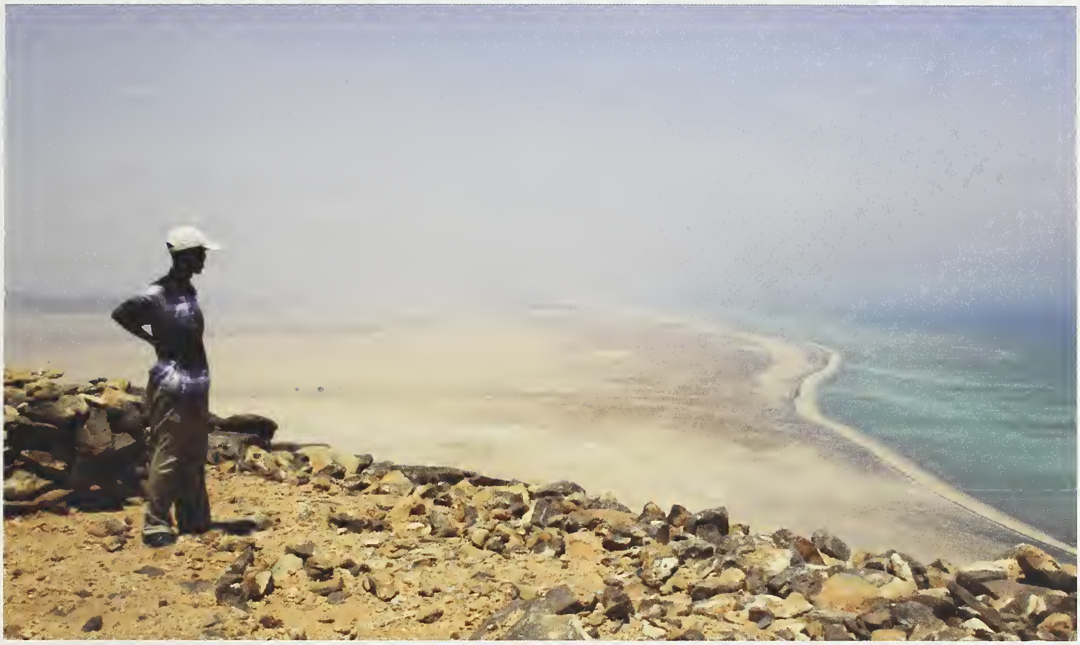

Figure 3. View from the Godoria plateau, looking north toward Ras Siyyan, which is *c.*25 km distant, and invisible due to haze (M. J. McGrady)

Vue vers le nord à partir du plateau Godoria vers Ras Siyyan, qui se trouve à environ 25 km et est invisible à cause de la brume (M. J. McGrady)

Table 1. Counts of the visible raptor migration over the Bab el Mandeb Strait, Djibouti, 2–10 March 2013.

Tableau 1. Recensements de la migration visible de rapaces au-dessus du Détroit de Bab-el-Mandeb, Djibouti, 2–10 mars 2013.

	2 Mar	3 Mar	4 Mar	5 Mar	6 Mar	7 Mar	8 Mar	9 Mar	10 Mar	TOTAL	%
Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*	37	166	271	67	55	315	276	369	217	1,773	38.86
Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*	29	84	233	15	73	71	309	158	195	1,167	25.58
Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*	0	0	5	11	5	6	66	64	69	226	4.95
Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*	2	2	4	7	0	8	17	29	7	76	1.67
European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*	1	1	4	4	0	4	5	0	2	21	0.46
Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	8	0.18
Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	0.09
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0.07
Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina*	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.07
Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.04
Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.04
Shikra *Accipiter badius*	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.04
Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.02
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.02
Unidentified falcons *Falco* sp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.02
Unidentified raptors (most probably Booted Eagle and Egyptian Vulture)	3	21	105	50	3	81	526	311	172	1,272	27.88
TOTALS	78	277	625	155	136	490	1,205	931	665	4,562	

Table 2. Rate of migration (birds per hour) per two-hour time blocks for Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* and Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* at the Bab el Mandeb Strait, Djibouti, 2–10 March 2013 (*n* = hours of observation within time block)

Tableau 2. Fréquence de passage (oiseaux par heure) par blocs de deux heures pour l'Aigle botté *Hieraaetus pennatus* et le Percnoptère d'Égypte *Neophron percnopterus* au Détroit de Bab-el-Mandeb, Djibouti, 2–10 mars 2013 (*n* = heures d'observation à l'intérieur du bloc)

	Time of day				
	08.00–10.00 (*n*=72)	10.00–12.00 (*n*=72)	12.00–14.00 (*n*=18)	14.00–16.00 (*n*=17)	16.00–18.00 (*n*=8)
Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*	14.9	9.13	0.4	1.8	0.6
Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*	13.8	2.4	0.1	0.2	0.0

of the count, respectively. Only three non-adult Egyptian Vultures were recorded; all were judged to be three years of age. Booted Eagles comprised an approximately equal number of dark and pale colour morphs.

Daily movement of migration path

On most days migration started between 08.30 and 09.00 hrs. The earliest records were at 08.00 (6 March). Egyptian Vultures were the first species observed every day at Ras Siyyan, migrating singly or in small groups. At inland watchpoints Booted Eagles were the first species observed daily. Early in the morning the migration arrived at Ras Siyyan exclusively from the west (i.e. no birds were seen migrating along the coast from the north or south). Later in the morning the migration moved south along a path inland from the coast, and visible to us *c*.1–2 km from the coastline. The rate of migration was highest at 08.00–10.00 hrs for Booted Eagles and Egyptian Vultures, after which the rates declined; after 12.00 hrs virtually no migration was visible from Ras Siyyan or our other observation locations (Table 2).

The location of the point of departure from Djibouti towards Yemen appeared to change during the day. Early in the day (up to *c*.10.00 hrs), Ras Siyyan was an important departure point. However, as the morning progressed (starting between 09.30 and 10.30 hrs) steadily increasing numbers of birds that arrived at Ras Siyyan from the west did not cross the strait, but turned south along the coast or moved south-west toward inland hills, where they gained altitude and disappeared from view, moving up and south. We searched unsuccessfully for a place where the migration concentrated after 10.00 hrs and birds departed Djibouti across the sea. We visited the Godoria plateau on three separate days (4, 7, 10 March) in the early afternoon. Only on 10 March did we witness any migration there, and on that day birds were still moving south along the coast and apparently not departing towards Arabia.

Discussion

We recorded a total of 4,562 migrating raptors of 14 species during nine days. The migration moved south as the morning progressed, and it gained altitude as temperatures increased, so these numbers represent only a proportion of the total migration that occurred during the period between Africa and Arabia.

Our findings confirm those of Welch & Welch (1991): (1) a significant migration of raptors occurs in spring over the Bab el Mandeb; (2) migration is most visible in the morning; (3) Egyptian Vultures and Booted Eagles are by far the commonest migrants; (4) Steppe Eagles and Steppe Buzzards do not feature importantly in the migration across the Bab el Mandeb in early March; and (5) the migration appears to shift south from the point where the strait is narrowest (Ras Siyyan) as the morning progresses and temperatures rise. Our observations also demonstrate that the importance of the site has not diminished despite the passage of time and the apparent erosion of the global conservation status of Egyptian Vultures.

Welch & Welch (1991) made their observations over just three days during unusual weather (overcast and hazy), and therefore were unsure if their findings were representative. Our observations during 2–6 March were made during unusually strong winds (according to local people) from the north-east and east, which probably also affected our counts, although they do not contradict the findings of Welch & Welch (1991). We recorded a greater variety of species than Welch & Welch (1991), most certainly due in part to the longer duration of our study and perhaps the different weather conditions.

It is our opinion that a very large proportion of the birds that were too distant to identify (almost 28% of all migrants seen) were eagles, probably Booted Eagles, and Egyptian Vultures because of their size and because the composition of the identifiable migration did not seem to change greatly over the course of the day. The few birds that were seen in the afternoons were almost always Booted Eagles or Egyptian Vultures.

The importance of the Bab el Mandeb for both Booted Eagles and Egyptian Vultures on migration is highlighted by the results of counts of migrant soaring birds made in spring 2012 at a bottleneck in the northern Red Sea. There, over 63 days of observation, 1,128 Egyptian Vultures and 1,177 Booted Eagles were counted (total migration = 183,275 birds) (Megalli & Hilgerloh 2013).

Generally, counts after 5 March were larger than those before that date. We do not know whether this was due to changes in our vantage points, different weather, a change in the volume of migration or some combination of these factors. Therefore, we do not know if our observations coincided with the peak migration. More work is needed to clarify this, but during a subsequent visit to Ras Siyyan on 19 March 2013, 1,861 migratory soaring birds, including 459 migrating Egyptian Vultures and 900 Booted Eagles, were recorded during just two hours (H. Rayaleh pers. obs.).

Unless there is a separate spring migration route for non-adult Egyptian Vultures, the age composition of birds that we recorded supports the idea that immatures from migratory populations in Asia and Europe remain well south of the breeding areas (Yosef & Alon 1997, Mundy *et al.* 1999), although subadults are also observed on northern breeding grounds (e.g. Stoynov *et al.* 2013).

We witnessed an apparent shift of the migration to the south as the morning progressed that coincided with the decline in numbers of migrants counted, but we were surprised not to then witness a stream of migrants over the Godoria plateau heading toward Yemen. The plateau is the only prominent topographic features on the coast south of Ras Siyyan and could provide uplift to facilitate the crossing. Welch & Welch (1991) thought that the decline in numbers of raptors seen crossing the strait as the day progressed was due to the migration gaining altitude over inland hills after mid morning and moving south, thereafter being unobservable at the strait. Our observations generally support this suggestion, but unlike the previous study we were unable to relocate the migration path further south, perhaps due to the unusually strong wind conditions.

Like Welch & Welch (1991), we observed no Steppe Buzzards and few Steppe Eagles, although these species comprise large proportions of the migration observed further north and their winter ranges include areas south of Djibouti. Both of these species are recorded at Eilat, in southern Israel, in large numbers after early March (e.g. Leshem & Yom-Tov 1996) and so theoretically should be migrating at the latitude of Djibouti at the time our observations were made. Although neither we nor Welch & Welch (1991, 1999a) observed many Steppe Eagles or Steppe Buzzards in spring, it is impossible to categorically state that no significant passages of these species occur over the strait because the total number of observation days is small. In the case of Steppe Eagles, satellite tracking suggests that most individuals move north via Suez in spring (Meyburg *et al.* 2003, 2012), but these data are from a small number of individuals. It is interesting to note that Steppe Buzzards and Steppe Eagles do apparently form a major component of the autumn soaring bird migration over the strait (Welch & Welch 1988).

Our observation of three Lesser Spotted Eagles *Clanga pomarina* is unexpected. This species is easily confused with both Steppe Eagle and Greater Spotted Eagle *C. clanga*, and all are quite variable in plumage. The main distinguishing feature that we used was the barring of the remiges, which also indicates that the individuals were not adults. Although we are reasonably confident that these birds were correctly identified because all were seen at relatively close range by both of the experienced observers, we accept that this is a difficult species to reliably identify, and no comparison with other species was possible. Welch & Welch did not record this species at Bab el Mandeb in spring (1991), but saw a few during autumn counts (1988).

While this work has demonstrated that a large number of Booted Eagles use the Bab el Mandeb during their spring migration, it is important to focus on Egyptian Vultures because of their poor and deteriorating conservation status. Raptors, particularly vultures, face a wide array of conservation challenges globally. In Africa targeted and inadvertent poisoning, intentional shooting, use for bushmeat and in traditional medicine, and electrocution and collision with utility infrastructure are just some of the threats that face vultures. Vultures provide important ecosystem services, some of which can directly benefit human health. Consequences of reductions in vulture populations can include greater risk of disease and increases in populations of other scavengers, including feral dogs (Markandya *et al.* 2008).

Threats to vultures vary across regions / countries in Africa. In Sudan shooting appears to be relatively common, the use of vultures for bushmeat or traditional medicine is more common in West Africa, and poisoning of vultures appears most common in countries where poaching of big game animals occurs and where pastoralists / farmers seek to control mammalian predators. Along some of the Red Sea coast, wind farm developments and power transmission infrastructure are potential threats to vultures and other soaring birds (Angelov *et al.* 2012). The environment for vultures in Djibouti appears to be more benign than elsewhere in Africa. Factors that might affect this include low levels of agriculture or herding, a relatively small and mostly unarmed human population that is concentrated in the capital city, and low levels of poaching. There are very few conservation efforts being pursued in Djibouti.

Djibouti is a small, politically stable, relatively safe and logistically ‘easy’ to visit country that offers opportunities to support Egyptian Vulture conservation in a number of ways. As an important migration bottleneck, the Bab el Mandeb can be used to monitor population trends (not numbers) of breeders from further north, especially if more is learned about how the migration path varies as the day progresses and long-term annual migration monitoring is established. However, in the case of Egyptian Vultures that use the Bab el Mandeb in spring, the immediate conservation value of counts is lessened by the difficulty of linking these to population size and the lack of long-term data. In terms of conservation, what is probably more important is to ensure that shooting and poisoning of migrants do not become common activities in Djibouti. While such persecution would obviously have a negative effect on any species, in the case of Egyptian Vultures the effect would probably be greater because of the age composition of the migration in Djibouti; we know that increased adult mortality (especially in a long-lived, delayed-maturity species like Egyptian Vulture) has the greatest effect on population size because it impacts numbers both directly and through decreased annual productivity (Mertz 1971, Stahl & Oli 2006). Also, it is important that any power generation and transmission infrastructure in the area is located sensitively and designed with migrating soaring and other birds in mind (Angelov *et al.* 2012). As a country in which Egyptian Vultures appear to be relatively safe, opportunities exist to better understand the ecology of resident birds, the ecology of young birds that will eventually seek to breed further north, and the non-breeding season ecology of breeding-aged birds from further north, and use any resultant data to better support conservation of the species across its range. Also, opportunities exist to promote conservation of vultures and other migrant soaring birds through eco-tourism (tourism of any type is under-developed in Djibouti) and public education. Egyptian Vultures may be a particularly appropriate flagship species for conservation in Djibouti because they are commensal with humans, even in very small and remote settlements, and so many people in small towns and rural areas are familiar with the species.

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Observations ornithologiques aux environs d'Antananarivo, Madagascar

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Ornithological observations around Antananarivo, Madagascar. Between 2005 and 2012, birds were observed at Ivandry Marsh, part of the vast plain of Laniera on the northern outskirts of Antananarivo, and in adjacent wastelands as well as at Lake Alarobia. A total of 63 species, including 32 Malagasy endemics, amongst which two are considered Endangered, three Vulnerable and one Near Threatened, has been identified. Several species difficult to observe or rare in other regions of Madagascar occur at Ivandry Marsh and its environs. Wastelands near the marsh are also regularly used by Sooty Falcons *Falco concolor* as a feeding ground in January–May. Lake Alarobia is an important nesting site for Ardeidae that feed in the surrounding marshes. Hundreds of ducks use the area in the late dry season. Given the city's proximity, the marsh and adjacent areas require protection to maintain the quality of the environment and its bird populations.

Résumé. Entre 2005 et 2012, les oiseaux ont été observés dans le marais d'Ivandry faisant partie de la vaste plaine de Laniera en périphérie nord d'Antananarivo, et dans les terrains en friches adjacents ainsi qu'au lac d'Alarobia. Un total de 63 espèces, dont 32 endémiques, comprenant deux espèces Menacées d'Extinction, trois Vulnérables et une Quasi Menacée, a été identifié. Certaines espèces difficilement observables dans d'autres régions de Madagascar ou rares peuvent être vues au marais d'Ivandry et dans ses environs. Les terrains en friches à proximité du marais sont aussi un lieu de nourrissage régulier du Faucon concolore *Falco concolor*, entre janvier et mai. Le lac d'Alarobia constitue un important lieu de nidification pour les Ardeidae qui trouvent leur nourriture dans les marais aux alentours. Des centaines d'Anatidae s'y reposent également en fin de saison sèche. Compte tenu de la proximité de la ville, le marais et les terrains adjacents nécessitent des mesures de protection pour maintenir la qualité du milieu et les populations d'oiseaux y vivant.

En tant que résident permanent à Madagascar, j'ai effectué entre août 2005 et avril 2012 une centaine de visites ornithologiques d'une durée d'environ deux heures chacune, réalisées le matin ou en fin de journée pendant les week-ends et congés dans un marais et à ses alentours près du quartier résidentiel d'Ivandry (18°51'S 47°31'E), situé en banlieue nord d'Antananarivo sur les Hauts-Plateaux malgaches (1.266 m). Le climat dans la zone étudiée comprend une saison sèche (mai–octobre) et une saison des pluies (novembre–avril). J'ai également réalisé quelques observations sur les lacs situés aux environs du marais, principalement le lac d'Alarobia et ceux du quartier d'Ankorondrano. Cette note présente le résultat de ces observations.

Zone d'étude

Le marais d'Ivandry se situe à l'extrémité sud de la plaine inondée de Laniera cultivée sur plusieurs milliers d'hectares de riz et s'étendant au nord jusqu'à l'aéroport d'Ivato. Il couvre quelques dizaines d'hectares et est un des rares endroits non cultivé dans la région. Les habitants du quartier proche d'Androhibe l'utilisent pour pêcher (petits poissons, écrevisses), faire paître leurs bovins, élever des canards domestiques et laver du linge. Quelques pigeons domestiques y vivent en liberté. Les terrains bordant du côté d'Androhibe le marais constitués de vieux vignobles en friches sont progressivement cultivés (maïs, manioc, haricots, arbres ornementaux / fruitiers) (Fig. 1). De l'autre

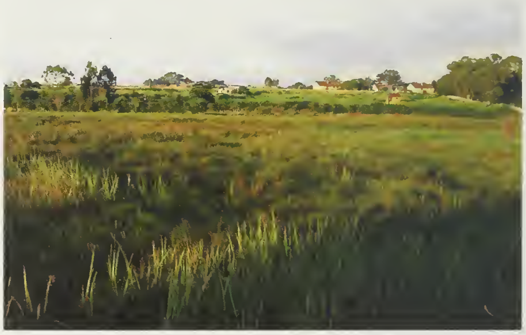


Figure 1. Vue sur le marais d'Ivandryet, en arrière-plan, les terrains en friche d'Androhibe, où chassent chaque année les Faucons concolores *Falco concolor* à la fin de la saison des pluies, mars 2009 (B. Boedts)

View of Ivandry marsh and, in the background, the fallow lands of Androhibe where Sooty Falcons *Falco concolor* hunt each year at the end of the wet season, March 2009 (B. Boedts) côté du marais se trouve la zone résidentielle d'Ivandry avec des jardins.

Le lac d'Alarobia fait partie du Parc de Tsarasaotra, site privé classé Ramsar depuis mai 2005. Ce lac comprend une importante héronnière en saison des pluies et représente aussi avec les autres lacs peu profonds de la zone péri-urbaine d'Antananarivo tels que le lac de 'Tana Water Front' du quartier d'Ankorondrano, un lieu de repos pendant la journée pour des centaines d'Anatidés en fin de saison sèche surtout en octobre.

Résultats

J'ai observé 63 espèces dont la liste est donnée en annexe. Au lac d'Alarobia, les hérons et aigrettes nichent en colonies mixtes dans les roseaux ou sur les arbres (bambou, *Eucalyptus*) en fin de saison sèche. Environ 600 nids appartenant à sept espèces d'Ardéidés ont été dénombrés en octobre 2007 dont la majorité appartenaient au Héron gardebœufs *Bubulcus ibis* (34% des nids comptés, situés à faible hauteur dans les bambous), à l'Aigrette dimorphe *Egretta dimorpha* (32%, en haut de grands arbres ; continue de nicher jusqu'au début de la saison sèche en mai–juin) et au Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides* (24%, au sol dans les roseaux). Les autres espèces nichaient en plus petits nombres, telles que le Bihoreau gris *Nycticorax nycticorax* (4%, en haut de grands arbres ; commence à nicher plus tôt que les autres espèces, en août–septembre), la Grande Aigrette *Egretta alba* (3%, en haut de grands arbres), le Héron ardoisé *E. ardesiaca* (2% au sol dans les roseaux ; commence à nicher plus tard en octobre–décembre), et le Crabier blanc *Ardeola idae* (1%, près de la colonie de Crabiers chevelus). Toutes ces espèces sont observées chassant dans le marais d'Ivandry soit isolément comme la Grande Aigrette et le Crabier blanc, soit en groupe.

Sur les lacs de la zone étudiée, deux espèces d'Anatidés, le Dendrocygne veuf *Dendrocygna viduata* et le Canard à bec rouge *Anas erythrorhyncha* se réunissent en fin de saison sèche en grand nombre pouvant dépasser le millier d'individus. Le Canard à bosse *Sarkidiornis melanotos* est présent dans ces groupes en plus petit nombre ne dépassant pas une douzaine d'individus (Fig. 4). A la tombée de la nuit, les Dendrocygnes veufs survolent les rizières par petits groupes vers leur lieu de nourrissage nocturne en faisant entendre leurs sifflements.

Les notes suivantes présentent des détails concernant les espèces globalement ou presque menacées ainsi que certaines espèces, formes ou comportements irrégulièrement ou rarement observés dans la zone étudiée. Statut de conservation UICN (BirdLife international 2012) : EN = Menacé d'Extinction, VU = Vulnérable, NT = Quasiment Menacé.

Grèbe malgache *Tachybaptus pelzelnii* (VU)
Observé deux fois au lac d'Alarobia le 13 octobre 2007 (trois) et le 20 septembre 2008 (deux, dont un en plumage nuptial marqué).

Crabier blanc *Ardeola idae* (EN)
Présent à Madagascar à la fin de la saison sèche (observation la plus précoce d'un individu au marais d'Ivandry le 12 septembre 2009) et pendant la saison des pluies dans les zones non cultivées, telles que la zone étudiée, pour se nourrir notamment d'écrevisses. Généralement seul, à l'écart du Crabier chevelu *A. ralloides,* plus abondant et avec lequel il est en compétition (Fig. 2). Le nombre de nids comptés au lac d'Alarobia a diminué entre 2007 (cinq) et 2010 (deux), confirmant ainsi que dans la zone, l'autre espèce de Crabier est mieux adaptée au milieu composé

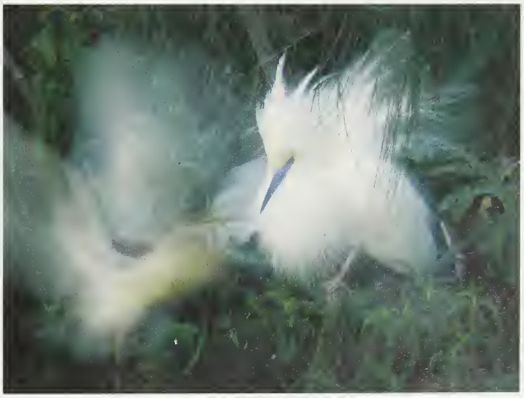


Figure 2. Crabier blanc *Ardeola idae* en plumage nuptial défendant son territoire contre l'intrusion d'un Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides*, lac d'Alarobia, octobre 2007 (B. Boedts)

Madagascar Pond Heron *Ardeola idae* in breeding plumage defending its territory against a Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*, Lake Alarobia, October 2007 (B. Boedts)

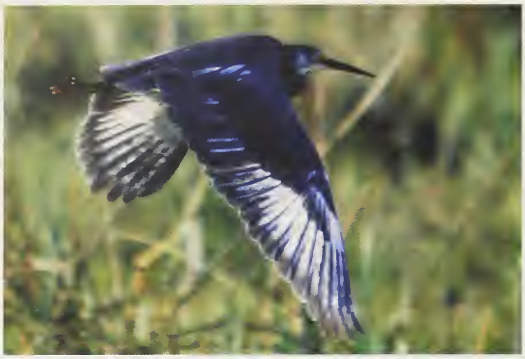


Figure 3. Aigrette dimorphe *Egretta dimorpha* de la forme partiellement sombre, marais d'Ivandry, 4 septembre 2011 (B. Boedts)

Dark form of Dimorphic Egret *Egretta dimorpha,* Ivandry marsh, 4 September 2011 (B. Boedts)

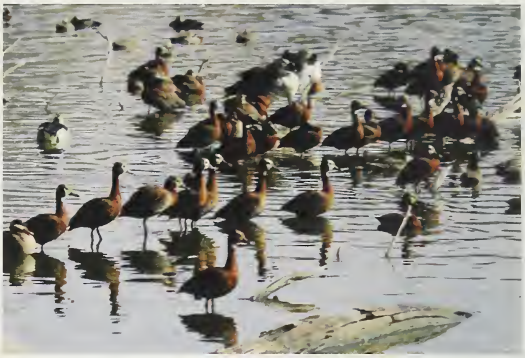


Figure 4. Dendrocygnes veufs / White-faced Whistling Ducks *Dendrocygna viduata*, Canards à bosse / Knob-billed Ducks *Sarkidiornis melanotos* et Canard à bec rouge / Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*, lac d'Alarobia, octobre 2008 (B. Boedts)

majoritairement de rizières cultivées (Martínez-Vilalta & Motis 1992).

Aigrette dimorphe *Egretta dimorpha*
Un individu de la forme partiellement sombre présent deux jours au marais a été photographié le 4 septembre 2011 (Fig. 3). La forme sombre est assez commune au bord de la mer mais rare à l'intérieur des terres (Langrand 1995).

Héron pourpré *Ardea purpurea*
Chasse seul en fin de journée dans le marais d'Ivandry en janvier–avril. S'installe pour la nuit parfois à deux au sommet de grands arbres.

Bec-ouvert africain *Anastomus lamelligerus*
Un individu observé au lac d'Alarobia du 22 septembre au 13 octobre 2007 et, probablement le même individu, du 20 septembre au 25 octobre 2008, en fin de journée, au repos généralement perché sur un arbre dans l'île au milieu du lac. L'espèce signalée auparavant en 1975 à Antananarivo est assez commune à l'ouest de Madagascar bien qu'en diminution (Langrand 1995).

Ibis falcinelle *Plegadis falcinellus*
Vu une seule fois de passage en vol au-dessus du marais d'Ivandry le 22 mars 2008. L'espèce assez commune à l'ouest est rare dans les autres régions, alors qu'elle était autrefois commune aux environs d'Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Dendrocygne fauve *Dendrocygna bicolor*
Une seule observation d'un individu s'envolant du marais d'Ivandry le 24 juillet 2011. L'espèce est localement commune à l'ouest et au nord, et assez rare dans les environs d'Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Canard de Meller *Anas melleri* (EN)
Une seule observation de deux individus en vol au-dessus du marais d'Ivandry le 29 janvier 2009. L'espèce est peu commune à Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Milan des chauves-souris *Macheiramphus alcinus*
Vu trois fois en vol en fin de journée dans les environs du marais d'Ivandry se dirigeant à chaque reprise vers le quartier plus urbanisé d'Androhibe le 11 avril 2010 (deux adultes), le 16 octobre 2010 (un) et le 16 octobre 2011 (un). Bien qu'aucune preuve de nidification n'existe pour Madagascar (Langrand 1995), il est possible que les deux observations réalisées en octobre puissent suggérer une nidification dans la zone étudiée.

Busard de Madagascar *Circus macrosceles* (VU)
Vu chassant en vol au-dessus du marais d'Ivandry le 10 septembre 2006 (un immature), le 25 octobre 2008 (un mâle) et au-dessus de la plaine de Laniera le 21 février 2010 (un immature). En 2010, un immature a été observé à plusieurs reprises entre le 10 octobre et le 21 novembre au lac d'Alarobia (Fig. 5).

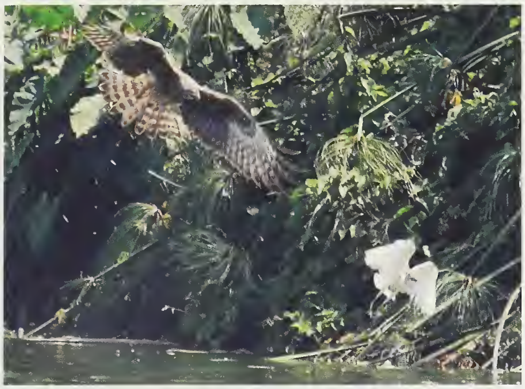


Figure 5. Busard de Madagascar *Circus macrosceles* immature essayant de capturer un Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides*, lac d'Alarobia, 10 octobre 2010 (B. Boedts)

Immature Réunion Harrier *Circus macrosceles* pursuing a Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*, Lake Alarobia, 10 October 2010 (B. Boedts)

Buse de Madagascar *Buteo brachypterus*

Trois observations d'individus de la forme sombre posés pendant de courtes durées près du marais d'Ivandry en avril 2008, mai 2009 et février 2010.

Faucon de Newton *Falco newtoni*

La forme rousse est restreinte à la région des Hauts-Plateaux (Sinclair 2003) (Fig. 6). Cependant, la forme blanche a été vue deux fois dans la zone étudiée le 30 octobre 2010 au lac d'Alarobia (un) et le 3 mars 2012 dans la plaine de Laniera (deux).

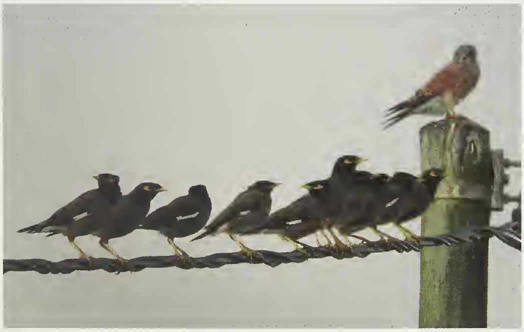


Figure 6. Groupe de Martins tristes *Acridotheres tristis* posés près d'un Faucon de Newton *Falco newtoni*, forme rousse, alentours du marais d'Ivandry, mai 2007 (B. Boedts)

Common Mynahs *Acridotheres tristis* and a rufous-morph Madagascar Kestrel *Falco newtoni*, near Ivandry marsh, May 2007 (B. Boedts)

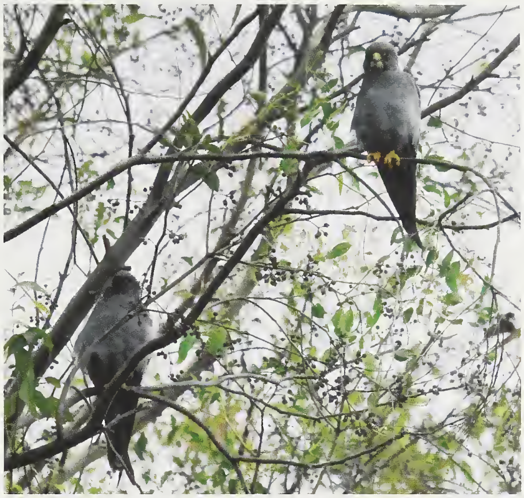


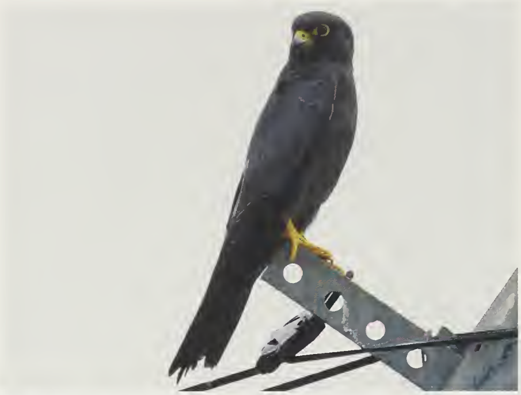
Figure 7. Faucons concolores *Falco concolor* adultes, près du marais d'Ivandry, mars 2011 (B. Boedts)

Adult Sooty Falcons *Falco concolor*, near Ivandry marsh, March 2011 (B. Boedts)

Faucon concolore *Falco concolor* (NT)

Observé durant sept années de suite au marais d'Ivandry et aux alentours, au plus tôt le 21 janvier (en 2007) et au plus tard le 16 mai (en 2010). Les faucons se regroupent aux heures chaudes de la journée pour chasser des insectes aux alentours du marais (Boedts 2010). Un nombre maximum d'individus a été enregistré avec six adultes et quatre immatures en 2011, année où les insectes Cetoniidae que chassent les faucons étaient abondants sur les plants sauvages d'Asteraceae à fleurs jaunes. De ce fait, contrairement aux autres années, les faucons utilisaient plus comme perchoir les branches hautes des arbres surplombant l'endroit où se trouvaient ces insectes, plutôt que les fils électriques ou les poteaux en bois comme d'autres années. Les faucons étaient très proches les uns des autres, parfois à moins d'un mètre, que ce soit lors de la chasse en vol ou sur leur perchoir (Fig. 7). Une forme sombre de faucon adulte photographiée en 2009 a été revue en 2011 (Fig. 8). En 2010, une forme sombre atypique d'immature a également été photographiée (Fig. 9).

En 2010 et 2012, en raison de la coupe précoce par les riverains des plants d'Asteraceae destinés à nourrir des animaux domestiques, les cétoines étaient moins abondants. De ce fait, les faucons se nourrissaient d'autres insectes tels que



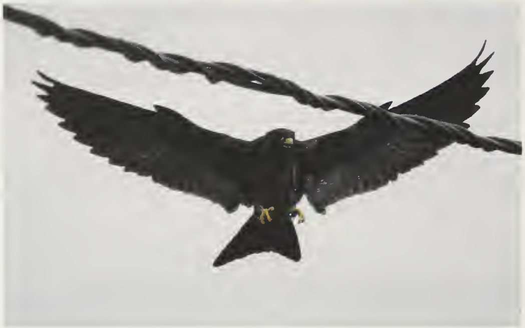


Figure 8 (en haut)**.** Forme sombre de Faucon concolore *Falco concolor* adulte, près du marais d'Ivandry, mars 2009 (B. Boedts)

Dark-morph adult Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*, near Ivandry marsh, March 2009 (B. Boedts)

Figure 9 (en bas)**.** Forme sombre de Faucon concolore *Falco concolor* immature, près du marais d'Ivandry, mars 2010 (B. Boedts)

Dark-morph immature Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*, near Ivandry marsh, March 2010 (B. Boedts)

des grands hyménoptères et odonates. De plus, la technique de décorticage en vol des insectes observée en 2009 et 2011 était moins utilisée. En 2012, un faucon a été vu en train de décortiquer en vol un petit oiseau du genre *Foudia.* La zone habituellement fréquentée les autres années par les faucons était quasiment désertée en 2012 et aucun regroupement n'a été observé, la plupart des observations concernant un ou deux individus chassant les libellules au crépuscule dans le marais.

Faucon pèlerin *Falco peregrinus*
Deux observations : un adulte de passage en vol le 29 mars 2007 et un immature posé en fin de journée sur un arbre en bordure de marais d'Ivandry le 28 août 2011. L'espèce est rare à Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Caille de Madagascar *Margaroperdix madagascarensis*
Vu une fois en bordure de marais d'Ivandry le 29 janvier 2009 (deux individus).

Turnix de Madagascar *Turnix nigricollis*
Vu deux fois furtivement dans les cultures aux alentours du marais d'Ivandry le 13 avril 2008 (une femelle) et égaré sur une terrasse le 21 janvier 2010 (un mâle).

Râle de Cuvier *Dryolimnas cuvieri*
Observation à deux reprises d'individus isolés aux alentours du marais d'Ivandry le 5 février 2006 et le 29 juillet 2008.

Marouette de Baillon *Porzana pusilla*
A partir du 30 décembre 2007 un adulte a été observé pendant quelques jours et le 15 octobre 2008 à un autre endroit du marais d'Ivandry. Considérée peu commune à Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Rhynchée peinte *Rostratula benghalensis*
Observé au marais d'Ivandry entre le 11 et le 29 juin 2006 (deux femelles paradant et trois mâles), le 27 août 2006 (une femelle), le 15 août 2010 (deux en vol) et le 22 janvier 2012 (un en vol).

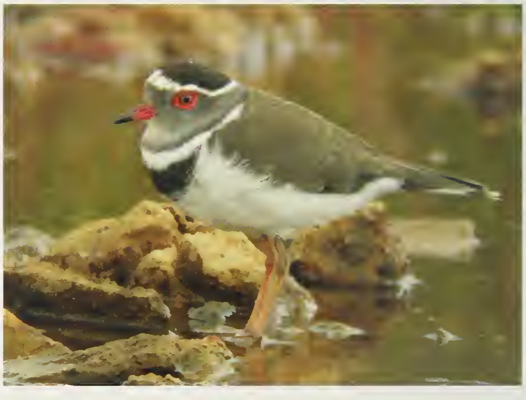


Figure 10. Gravelot à triple collier *Charadrius tricollaris* à une mare temporaire près du marais d'Ivandry, mars 2007 (B. Boedts)

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* at a temporary pond near Ivandry marsh, March 2007 (B. Boedts)

Gravelot à triple collier *Charadrius tricollaris*
Considéré comme rare à Antananarivo (Langrand 1995), la sous-espèce endémique *bifrontatus* (Fig. 10) a niché au marais d'Ivandry où deux petits étaient observés au nourrissage les 19 et 26 septembre 2010.

Chevalier guignette *Actitis hypoleucos*
Bien que considéré commun sur les Hauts-Plateaux (Langrand 1995), seulement deux observations d'individus isolés au marais d'Ivandry les 15 août 2005 et 26 septembre 2010.

Bécassine malgache *Gallinago macrodactyla* (VU)
Observé au marais d'Ivandry les 3–4 octobre 2009 (deux), les 16–17 janvier 2010 (deux), le 12 mai 2010 (un), les 28 mai (un) et 24 juillet 2011 (deux).

Tourterelle à masque de fer *Oena capensis*
Observé en mai 2010 (un mâle), décembre (un couple) et janvier 2011 (un mâle). Elle est rare à Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Coucou de Madagascar *Cuculus rochii*
Chant le plus précoce entendu le 27 septembre 2010. Présent dans la zone étudiée jusqu'en avril (Fig. 11). Cependant, un jeune coucou blessé à la patte a encore été vu en juin 2009.

Chouette effraie *Tyto alba*
Présent dans les zones les plus boisées de la zone étudiée. En octobre 2006, un cadavre d'effraie a été découvert au pied d'un arbre près du marais d'Ivandry. Elle fréquente en outre les bois et jardins du Parc de Tsarasaotra.

Hibou du Cap *Asio capensis*
Observé toute l'année au marais d'Ivandry et à ses alentours, sauf pendant la période de mai–juillet. En fin de journée, il a été observé perché sur des poteaux (avril 2007) ou des branches de vigne (octobre 2009), passant d'un tas de pailles à l'autre à l'affût sans doute de petits rongeurs attirés par les derniers grains de riz (janvier 2009) (Fig. 12), posé dans l'herbe à proximité de vaches en pâture (novembre 2010), ou sur des mottes de terre pour chasser de gros coléoptères dans un champ fraîchement labouré (février 2010).

Engoulevent de Madagascar *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*
Présent toute l'année dans la zone étudiée et reste localement abondant sur les terrains défrichés du quartier résidentiel d'Ivandry malgré la perte d'habitat à cause de la construction de logements et de la présence de chats domestiques qui attrapent notamment des jeunes (janvier 2012). En octobre 2007, une femelle trouvée blessée a pondu un

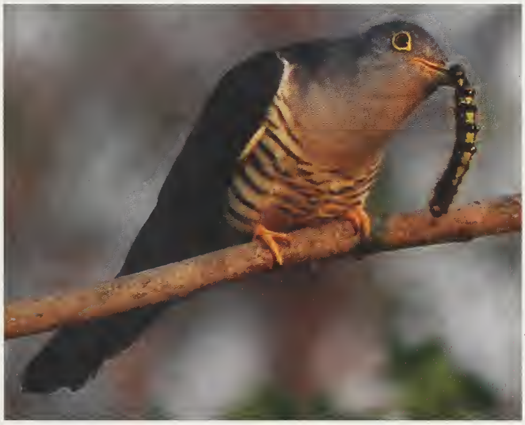


Figure 11. Coucou de Madagascar *Cuculus rochii*, près du marais d'Ivandry, octobre 2009 (B. Boedts)

Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus rochii*, near Ivandry Marsh, October 2009 (B. Boedts)

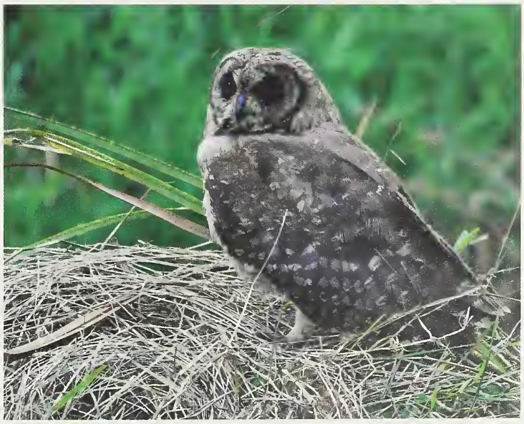


Figure 12. Hibou du Cap *Asio capensis* sur un tas de pailles de riz, marais d'Ivandry, février 2009 (B. Boedts)

African Marsh Owl *Asio capensis* on pile of rice straw, Ivandry Marsh, February 2009 (B. Boedts)

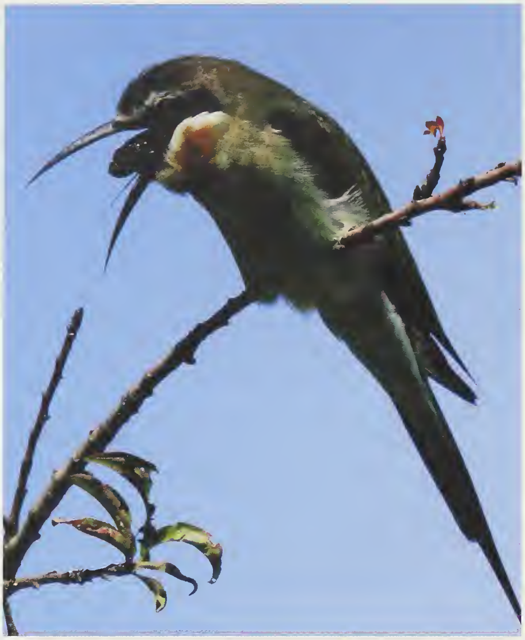


Figure 13. Guêpier de Madagascar *Merops superciliosus* régurgitant une pelote, près du marais d'Ivandry, avril 2010 (B. Boedts)

Madagascar Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*, near Ivandry Marsh, April 2010 (B. Boedts)

œuf. Celui-ci était ovale, mesurant 2,7 × 1,8 cm et de couleur blanc-jaunâtre avec des taches allongées gris-noir plus denses à la base.

Martinets noirs malgaches *Apus* (*barbatus*) *balstoni*
Petits groupes ne dépassant pas cinq individus en vol rapide observés le 15 octobre 2008 (près du lac d'Alarobia), le 16 octobre 2010 et le 16 octobre 2011 (au-dessus des rizières et du marais d'Ivandry).

Huppe fasciée *Upupa epops*
Observé qu'une seule fois dans un jardin du quartier d'Ivandry le 25 septembre 2005. Considérée rare à Antananarivo (Langrand 1995).

Alouette malgache *Mirafra hova*
Bien que considéré très commun sur les Hauts-Plateaux (Langrand 1995), observé seulement trois fois : le 5 février 2006, le 8 avril 2007 et 29 mai 2011, dans les herbes au bord du marais d'Ivandry.

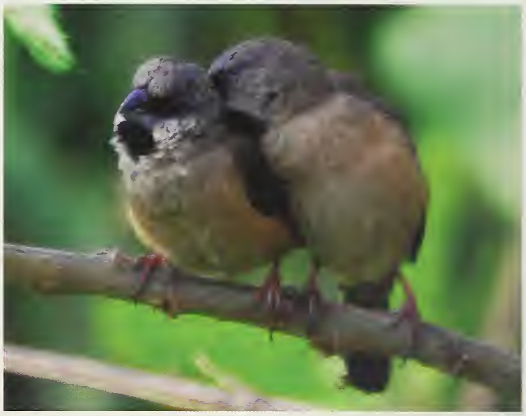


Figure 14. Mannikins de Madagascar *Lonchura nana* se toilettant mutuellement, près du marais d'Ivandry, novembre 2008 (B. Boedts)

Madagascar Mannikins *Lonchura nana* allopreening, near Ivandry Marsh, November 2008 (B. Boedts)

Hirondelle paludicole *Riparia paludicola*
En petits groupes d'une dizaine d'individus de passage au marais d'Ivandry en août–octobre.

Hirondelle des Mascareignes *Phedina borbonica*
Observé généralement en groupe dépassant la vingtaine d'individus souvent posés à terre ou sur la route aux mois d'arrivée et de départ à partir du mois d'août jusqu'en janvier. Observations à proximité du marais d'Ivandry de jeunes nourris par leurs parents le 18 octobre 2009 et le 16 octobre 2010, près d'une ancienne ferme où l'espèce doit nicher.

Tarier pâtre *Saxicola torquatus*
Nichées observées au nourrissage dans la zone étudiée (jardins, friches, marais) le 8 octobre 2006, le 18 octobre 2008 et le 22 octobre 2011.

Petite Eroesse *Neomixis tenella*
Un juvénile observé le 22 octobre 2006 dans les arbres aux alentours du marais d'Ivandry.

Zosterops malgache *Zosterops maderaspatana*
Observé isolément pendant la saison des pluies et en groupes de plusieurs individus émettant des cris passant d'un arbre à l'autre en fin de saison sèche, notamment à la recherche de petits fruits, type *Morus*.

Conclusion

Les lacs et marais de la périphérie nord d'Antananarivo constituent un ensemble important de biotopes pour la nidification d'au moins sept espèces d'Ardeidae, dont une menacée d'extinction, et pour le repos/nourrissage de centaines d'Anatidae en fin de saison sèche. Malgré la forte pression humaine en raison de la proximité de la ville, un total de 63 espèces d'oiseaux dont 32 endémiques à Madagascar ou à la région y a été observé entre 2005 et 2012. Des espèces Menacées d'Extinction, comme le Crabier blanc et le Canard de Meller, Vulnérables, comme le Grèbe malgache et le Busard de Madagascar, et Quasiment Menacée, comme le Faucon concolore, ont été vues de manière régulière ou sporadique. En plus des nicheurs réguliers autour du marais tels que le Coucou de Madagascar, l'Engoulevent de Madagascar, le Martin-pêcheur de Madagascar *Corythornis vintsioides*, l'Hirondelle des Mascareignes, le Tarier pâtre et la Cisticole de Madagascar *Cisticola cherina*, certaines espèces telles que la Sarcelle hottentote *Anas hottentota*, le Gravelot à triple collier, le Coucal malgache *Centropus toulou* et la petite Eroesse nichent de manière occasionnelle dans le marais d'Ivandry. Certaines espèces plus discrètes telles que le Milan des chauves-souris et la Rhynchée peinte pourraient également nicher dans la zone étudiée. Le statut et les habitats fréquentés ont été déterminés pour les espèces vues à Ivandry entre 2005 et 2012.

Si le lac d'Alarobia qui est visité par de nombreux ornithologues bénéficie d'un statut de protection, il n'en va pas de même pour les marais environnants, en particulier le marais d'Ivandry. Les terrains en friches à proximité sont aussi un lieu de nourrissage régulier du Faucon concolore qui chasse des gros insectes comme les cétoines abondants certaines années en fin de saison des pluies sur une espèce de plante sauvage. Des mesures de protection sont nécessaires pour maintenir la qualité de ces milieux et par là même des populations d'oiseaux y vivant.

Remerciements

Je remercie Ron Demey et Olivier Langrand pour leurs commentaires utiles sur une première version de l'article, ainsi que Lily-Arison René de Rolland pour sa visite des Faucons concolores à Ivandry en mars 2011 et ses encouragements à publier l'article.

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Annexe 1. Espèces d'oiseaux observées aux environs d'Antananarivo, Madagascar, 2005–2012. L'ordre et la taxonomie suivent Langrand (1995) avec quelques amendements. Statut de conservation UICN (BirdLife international 2012) : EN = Menacé d'Extinction, VU = Vulnérable, NT = Quasiment Menacé. Statut : * = endémique à Madagascar ou à d'autres îles du sud-ouest de l'Océan indien, NS-r = nicheur sédentaire régulier (nidification observée plusieurs années), NS-o = nicheur sédentaire occasionnel (nidification observée une seule année), NM = nicheur migrateur (pendant la saison des pluies), S = sédentaire : présent toute l'année mais preuve de nidification manquante, V = visiteur irrégulier de passage parfois prolongé quel que soit la saison, sauf si spécifié, M-loc = migrateur local de passage pendant la saison des pluies, M-ic = migrateur intercontinental de passage pendant la saison des pluies, E = echappé de captivité. Fréquence d'observation : C = commun ou assez commun (espèce observée à chaque visite ou à >50% des visites dans le bon milieu et la période de l'année appropriée), I = irrégulièrement observé (<50% des visites dans le bon milieu), R = rare (1–3 observations sur la période considérée).

Appendix 1. Bird species recorded around Antananarivo, Madagascar, 2005–2012. Sequence and taxonomy follow Langrand (1995) with a few amendments. IUCN threat status (BirdLife International 2012): EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened. Status: * = endemic to Madagascar and other south-west Indian Ocean islands, NS-r = regular sedentary breeder (nesting observed several years), NS-o = occasional sedentary breeder (nesting observed one year), NM = migrant breeder (during the wet season), S = sedentary: present throughout the year but evidence of nesting lacking, V = irregular visitor, passage sometimes extended regardless of season, unless specified, M-loc = local passage migrant during the wet season, M-ic = intercontinental passage migrant during the rainy season, E = escaped from captivity. Encounter rate: C = common or quite common (species observed on every visit or >50% of visits in appropriate habitat and period of year), I = infrequently observed (<50% of visits in appropriate habitat), R = rare (1–3 records over the period).

		UICN	Statut	Fréquence d'observation	Habitats fréquentés
PODICIPEDIDAE					
*Tachybaptus pelzelnii**	Grèbe malgache	VU	V	R	Lac
ARDEIDAE					
Nycticorax nycticorax	Bihoreau gris		NS-r	C	Lac, marais
Ardeola ralloides	Crabier chevelu		NS-r	C	Lac, marais
*Ardeola idae**	Crabier blanc	EN	NM-r, M-ic	I	Lac, marais
Bubulcus ibis	Héron gardebœufs		NS-r	C	Lac, marais
Butorides striata	Héron strié		S	I	Marais
Egretta ardesiaca	Héron ardoisé		NS-r	I	Lac, marais
*Egretta dimorpha**	Aigrette dimorphe		NS-r	C	Lac, marais
Egretta alba	Grande Aigrette		NS-r	C	Lac, marais
Ardea purpurea	Héron pourpré		V	I	Marais
SCOPIDAE					
Scopus umbretta	Ombrette		V	I	Marais
CICONIIDAE					
Anastomus lamelligerus	Bec-ouvert africain		V	R	Lac
THRESKIORNITHIDAE					
Plegadis falcinellus	Ibis falcinelle		V	R	Marais
ANATIDAE					
Dendrocygna bicolor	Dendrocygne fauve		V	R	Marais
Dendrocygna viduata	Dendrocygne veuf		M-loc	C	Lac, marais
Sarkidiornis melanotos	Canard à bosse		M-loc	C	Lac
*Anas melleri**	Canard de Meller	EN	V	R	Marais
Anas erythrorhyncha	Canard à bec rouge		M-loc, S	C	Lac, marais
Anas hottentota	Sarcelle hottentote		NS-o	I	Marais, lac (1 obs.)
ACCIPITRIDAE					
Macheiramphus alcinus	Milan des Chauves-Souris		NS-o (?)	R	Friches
Milvus aegyptius	Milan à bec jaune		V	C	Tout biotope
*Circus macrosceles**	Busard de Madagascar	VU	V	I	Lac, marais
*Buteo brachypterus**	Buse de Madagascar		V	R	Friches
FALCONIDAE					
*Falco newtoni**	Faucon de Newton		S	C	Tout biotope
Falco concolor	Faucon concolore	NT	M-ic	C	Marais, friches
Falco peregrinus	Faucon pèlerin		V	R	Friches
PHASIANIDAE					
*Margaroperdix madagascarensis**	Caille de Madagascar		V	R	Friches
TURNICIDAE					
*Turnix nigricollis**	Turnix de Madagascar		V	R	Cultures, friches
RALLIDAE					
*Dryolimnas cuvieri**	Râle de Cuvier		S	R	Friches
Porzana pusilla	Marouette de Baillon		V	R	Marais
Gallinula chloropus	Poule d'eau commune		S	C	Lac, marais
ROSTRATULIDAE					
Rostratula benghalensis	Rhynchée peinte		NS-o (?)	I	Marais
CHARADRIIDAE					
Charadrius tricollaris	Gravelot à triple collier		NS-o	C	Marais
SCOLOPACIDAE					
Actitis hypoleucos	Chevalier guignette		M-ic	R	Marais

		UICN	Statut	Fréquence d'observation	Habitats fréquentés
*Gallinago macrodactyla**	Bécassine malgache	VU	V	I	Marais
COLUMBIDAE					
Oena capensis	Tourterelle à masque de fer		V	I	Friches, cultures
PSITTACIDAE					
*Coracopsis vasa**	Grand Perroquet Vasa		E	I	Ville
*Agapornis cana**	Inséparable à tête grise		E	I	Friches, cultures
CUCULIDAE					
*Cuculus rochii**	Coucou de Madagascar		NM, M-ic	C	Friches
*Centropus toulou**	Coucal malgache		NS-*o*	C	Lac, friches
TYTONIDAE					
Tyto alba	Chouette effraie		S	I	Jardins
STRIGIDAE					
Asio capensis	Hibou du Cap		V	I	Marais, cultures
CAPRIMULGIDAE					
*Caprimulgus madagascariensis**	Engoulevent de Madagascar		NS-r	C	Friches, jardins
APODIDAE					
*Apus (barbatus) balstoni**	Martinet noir malgache		M-loc	I	Marais
ALCEDINIDAE					
*Corythornis vintsioides**	Martin-pêcheur de Madagascar		NS-r	C	Lac, marais
MEROPIDAE					
*Merops superciliosus**	Guêpier de Madagascar		S	C	Marais, friches
UPUDIDAE					
Upupa epops	Huppe fasciée		V	R	Jardins
ALAUDIDAE					
*Mirafra hova**	Alouette malgache		V	R	Friches
HIRUNDINIDAE					
Riparia paludicola	Hirondelle paludicole		M-loc	C	Marais, friches
*Phedina borbonica**	Hirondelle des Mascareignes		NM, M-loc	C	Marais, friches
MOTACILLIDAE					
*Motacilla flaviventris**	Bergeronnette malgache		S	C	Marais, jardins
PYCNONOTIDAE					
*Hypsipetes madagascariensis**	Bulbul noir		S	I	Jardins
TURDIDAE					
Saxicola torquatus	Tarier pâtre		NS-r	C	Tout biotope
CISTICOLIDAE					
*Cisticola cherina**	Cisticole de Madagascar		NS-r	C	Marais, friches
SYLVIIDAE					
*Acrocephalus newtoni**	Rousserole de Newton		S	I	Marais, friches
*Nesillas typica**	Fauvette de Madagascar		S	I	Friches, jardins
*Neomixis tenella**	Petite Eroesse		NS-*o*	I	Jardins
NECTARINIIDAE					
*Nectarinia souimanga**	Souimanga malgache		V	I	Jardins, friches
*Nectarinia notata**	Souimanga angaladian		V	I	Jardins, friches
ZOSTEROPIDAE					
*Zosterops maderaspatana**	Zosterops malgache		V	I	Jardins, friches
STURNIDAE					
Acridotheres tristis	Martin triste		S	C	Tout biotope
PLOCEIDAE					
*Foudia madagascariensis**	Foudi de Madagascar		S	C	Tout biotope
ESTRILDIDAE					
*Lonchura nana**	Mannikin de Madagascar		S	C	Friches, marais

Unusual concentration of Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* nests on pylons in northern Namibia

Grzegorz Kopij

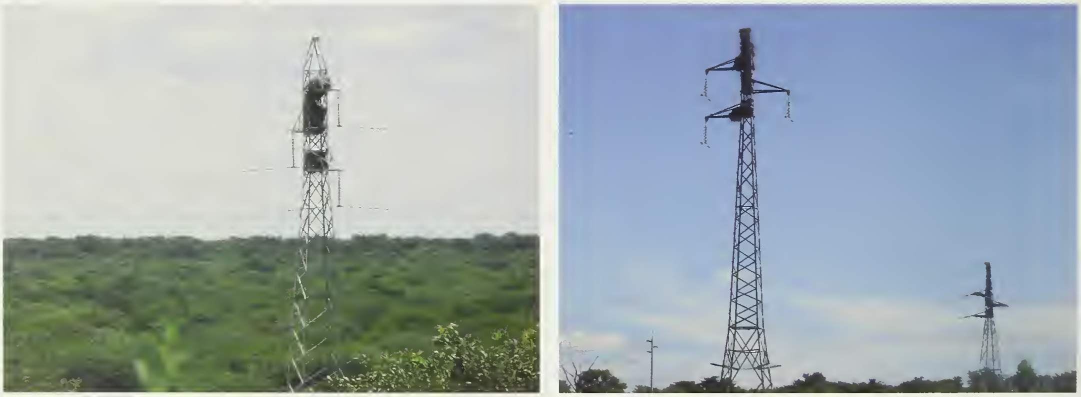
Concentration inhabituelle de nids de l'Alecto à bec rouge *Bubalornis niger* sur des pylônes au nord de la Namibie. En mars 2011, presque chaque pylône d'électricité (*n* = environ 4.200) le long de la route d'Ondangwa à Katima Mulilo, au nord de la Namibie, supportait des nids de l'Alecto à bec rouge *Bubalornis niger*. Les pylônes se trouvent à une distance de 300 m les uns des autres. Généralement chaque pylône ne supportait que quelques nids, mais certains en avaient de sept à 12. En avril 2013, de nombreux pylônes n'avaient pas de nids du tout. La pluviosité au nord de la Namibie était très élevée en 2011, mais basse en 2013. Ceci pourrait indiquer que l'Alecto à bec rouge préfère nicher sur des pylônes pendant des saisons à forte pluviosité. Placer les nids en hauteur sur des constructions métalliques pourrait également limiter la prédation.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*, a common resident in southern and eastern Africa, constructs large-chambered nests of thorny sticks on trees and man-made structures such as windmills and pylons (Vernon & Dean 2005). There are apparently some regional variations in nest-site selection. For example, in Limpopo Province, South Africa, nests are frequently constructed in trees beside roads (Vernon & Dean 2005), whilst in the Omusati and Oshana regions, Namibia, they are usually in palms *Hyphaene petersiana* (pers. obs.).

In northern Namibia, a high-voltage powerline follows the Ondangwa–Rundu (1,148 km) and Rundu–Andara (*c.*200 km) roads. The line runs mostly through Kalahari Sandveld (Mendelsohn *et al.* 2009), i.e. north-eastern Kalahari Woodland (*c.*1,000 km) and Karstveld (*c.*300 km); between Rundu and Andara it follows the Okavango River valley.

In March 2011, I found that almost every pylon (*n* = *c.*4,200, at 300 m-intervals) held Red-billed Buffalo Weaver nests (Figs. 1–2). All of the pylons that were visible from the car while travelling between Ondangwa and Katima Mulilo were checked. There were usually just a few nests on each pylon, but some held as many as 7–12 nests. No raptors were seen, although they are known to site their nests on those belonging to buffalo weavers (Vernon & Dean 2005). However, the breeding season of most raptors was already finished.

Brown & Lawson (1989) also found Red-billed Buffalo Weaver to be the commonest bird species nesting on electricity pylons in southern and central Namibia, with a mean 4.9 nests per



Figures 1–2. Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* nests on pylons, northern Namibia, March 2011 (Grzegorz Kopij)

Nids de l'Alecto à bec rouge *Bubalornis niger* sur des pylônes, Namibie du nord, mars 2011 (Grzegorz Kopij) ten pylons. Unfortunately, the percentage of pylons occupied by buffalo weaver nests in those regions is not given, but it was most probably much lower than in northern Namibia, and lower by an order of magnitude than in southern Namibia. It appears that the number of buffalo weaver nests on pylons in Namibia is positively correlated with rainfall, while the reverse is true of raptors (Brown & Lawson 1989).

In most bird species, the main factors influencing nest-site preference are predation, food resources and nest-site availability. Since the two latter factors are not limiting in Kalahari Woodland, it appears that only predation plays a role. Many snakes and viverids (Carnivora: Viveridae) occur in this area, and these may prey heavily on the large and conspicuous buffalo weaver nests in trees. Placing nests high above the ground on metal constructions may prevent predator access. Nests on pylons probably do not persist longer than those in trees. While travelling the same road in April 2013, I observed that many pylons were devoid of Red-billed Buffalo Weaver nests. Rainfall in northern Namibia was very high in 2011, but was low in 2013. This suggests that Red-billed Buffalo Weavers prefer pylons for nesting in very wet seasons.

Acknowledgement

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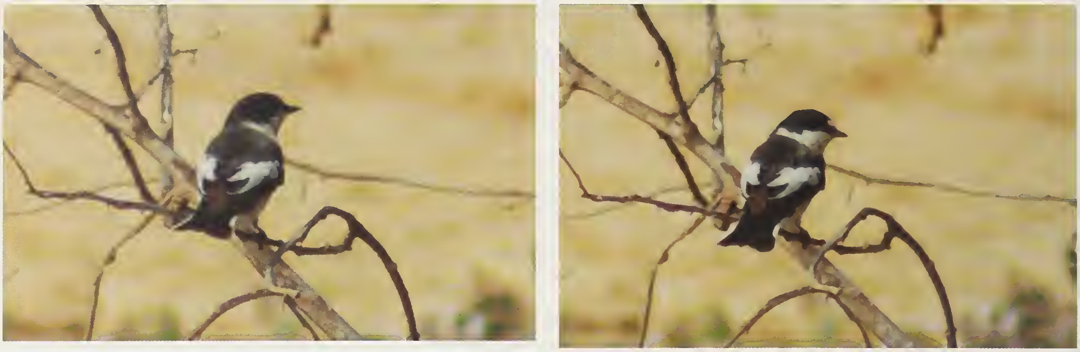
First documented record of Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* for Libya

Abdulmaula Hamza[a] and Jaber Yahia[b]

Première mention documentée du Gobemouche à demi-collier *Ficedula semitorquata* pour la Libye. Un mâle adulte du Gobemouche à demi-collier *Ficedula semitorquata* a été photographié le 31 mars 2010 à Sebkhet Hasila, sur la côte libyenne à environ 90 km à l'est de Sirte. Deux observations précédentes de mâles ont été signalées à deux sites différents entre Ajdabiya et Benghazi, les 29 mars et 1 avril 2006. L'observation présentée ici est toutefois la première donnée documentée pour le pays de ce migrateur paléarctique.

During a field trip to the north-central coastal wetlands of Libya on 31 March 2010, a black-and-white *Ficedula* flycatcher was seen to land on a low sandstone hill, near the beach north of Sebkhet Hasila (31°24'45"N 17°26'65"E), *c.*90 km east of Sirte. When it moved between shrubs <10 m from us, we were able to photograph it and notice the incomplete white collar, small white forehead patch and white outer tail feathers (Figs. 1–2). These features suggested the bird was an adult male Semi-collared Flycatcher *F. semitorquata* in breeding plumage. Adult male Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis* in breeding plumage has an all-white collar, a large white



Figures 1–2. Semi-collared Flycatcher / Gobemouche à demi-collier *Ficedula semitorquata*, Sebkhet Hasila, Libya, 31 March 2010 (Jaber Yahia)

forehead patch and a generally all-black tail, whilst Pied Flycatcher *F. hypoleuca* lacks a white collar (Mild 1993, Svensson *et al.* 1999). Although some male Pied Flycatchers of the North African race *speculigera* (Atlas Flycatcher) possess a half-collar, they can be distinguished by their larger forehead patch and all-black tail (Svensson *et al.* 1999). The identification was subsequently confirmed from the photographs. The bird was observed between 12.30 and 13.15 hrs, during which period the sky was clear, temperature *c.*30°C and wind speed 15 km/h. Other species observed were two adult Black Wheatears *Oenanthe leucura*, a Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe* and two Crested Larks *Galerida cristata*.

Both Collared and Pied Flycatchers are passage migrants through Libya, but this is the first documented record of Semi-collared Flycatcher in the country (Toschi 1969, Bundy 1976, Clement & Taylor 2006). There are, however, two previous sight records of single males on 29 March and 1 April 2006 at two different sites between Ajdabiya and Benghazi (P. Isenmann & J. Hering *in litt.* 2013). The species breeds from south-east Europe and Turkey to the Caucasus and northern Iran, and winters in east-central Africa from southern Sudan to western Kenya and western Tanzania (Clement & Taylor 2006). Considered Near Threatened, the species is estimated to be undergoing a moderately rapid population decline, mainly because of habitat loss due to forestry practices on its breeding grounds (BirdLife International 2013). Return migration is early and in North Africa it is a regular spring passage visitor in Egypt between mid March and mid May (Goodman & Meininger 1989). Further west, there is only a single definite record, in Tunisia (Isenmann *et al.* 2005), with none from Algeria and those from Morocco are considered uncertain (Isenmann & Moali 2000, Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

Acknowledgements

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First record of Bamenda Apalis *Apalis bamendae* for Nigeria

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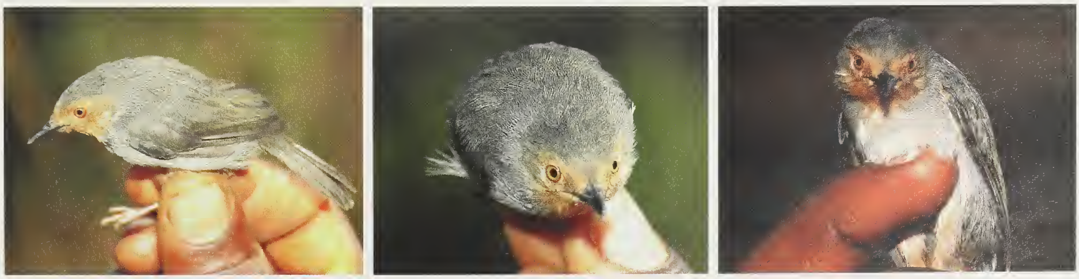
Première mention de l'Apalis du Bamenda *Apalis bamendae* pour le Nigeria. Le 12 février 2013, un Apalis du Bamenda *Apalis bamendae* a été capturé et photographié dans la Forêt classée de Ngel Nyaki (07°05'N 11°04'E), à l'est du Nigeria. Il s'agit de la première mention pour le pays de cette espèce, qui était considérée comme endémique au Cameroun.

On 12 February 2013 at 11.10 hrs, we mist-netted a small, mainly pale grey warbler with a rufous 'face' at Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve (07°05'N 11°04'E), Taraba State, Nigeria, which we tentatively identified as Bamenda Apalis *Apalis bamendae* (Figs. 1–3). We forwarded photographs to Dr Shiiwua Manu and Ron Demey, both of whom confirmed the identification.

This is the first record for Nigeria of Bamenda Apalis, which was considered endemic to Cameroon, where it is a not uncommon to locally common resident in the Bamenda highlands and the Adamawa Plateau (Borrow & Demey 2001). Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve is located at the eastern edge of the Mambilla Plateau and is 45 km^2 in extent, of which *c.*7.5 km^2 comprises montane / submontane forest at altitudes of 1,400–1,600 m (Chapman & Chapman 2001). The forest is surrounded by overgrazed grassland and savannah (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989). It is an Important Bird Area (IBA) and harbours several species restricted to the Cameroon Mountains Endemic Bird Area, including Western Mountain Greenbul *Andropadus tephrolaemus*, Cameroon Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus poensis*, Black-capped Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus herberti*, Cameroon Sunbird *Cyanomitra oritis*, Yellow-breasted Boubou *Laniarius atroflavus* and Bannerman's Weaver *Ploceus bannermani* (Ezealor 2001).



Figures 1–3. Bamenda Apalis / Apalis du Bamenda *Apalis bamendae*, Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve, Nigeria, 12 February 2013 (Charles A. Nsor)

Considering the occurrence of several other montane forest fragments on the Mambilla Plateau that may be suitable for Bamenda Apalis, it is recommended to search for the species at these sites and organise surveys to establish its population size.

Acknowledgements

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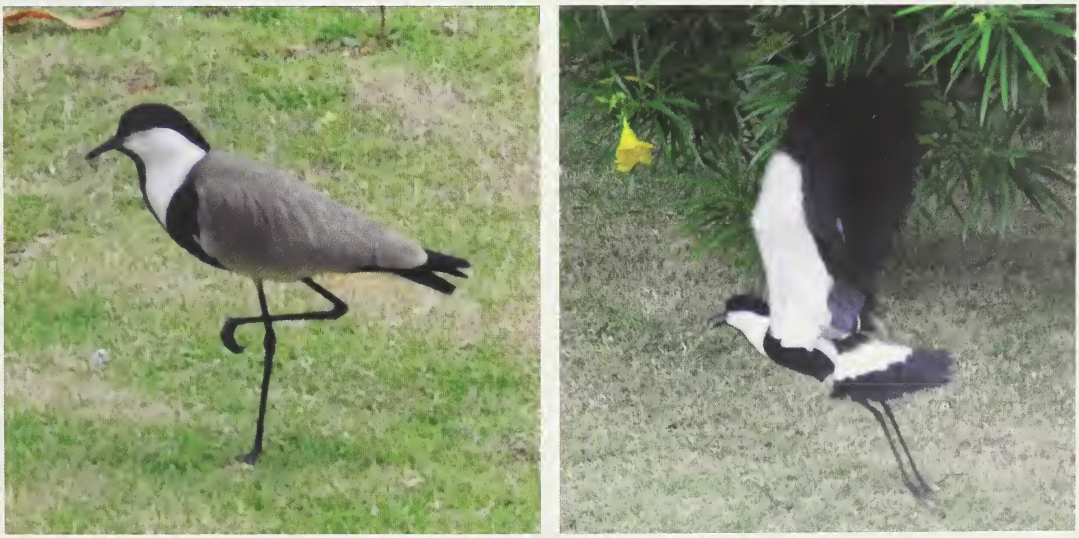
First record of Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* for São Tomé and Príncipe

Simon Valle[a] *and Madalena Patacho*[b]

Première observation du Vanneau éperonné *Vanellus spinosus* à São Tomé et Príncipe. Le 21 mars 2012, un Vanneau éperonné *Vanellus spinosus* a été photographié au Bom Bom Island Resort, Príncipe. L'oiseau est resté sur le site jusqu'au 30 mars. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour São Tomé et Príncipe et pour les îles du Golfe de Guinée. De plus, il s'agit peut-être de la première preuve que cette espèce peut traverser une étendue de mer d'au moins 210 km.

On 21 March 2012, MP observed a large plover on the beach of Bom Bom Island Resort (01°41'N 07°24'E), at the northernmost tip of the island of Príncipe. MP immediately realised that it was very different from the bird species usually seen on the island (which do not include plovers), and obtained several photographs (Figs. 1–2). The bird remained on the resort grounds until 30 March, before disappearing. It was subsequently identified from the photographs by SV as an adult Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* based on its distinctive plumage. The crown and nape were jet black, sharply contrasting with the white lower face and neck-sides. The upperparts were buff-brown. A coarse black stripe ran from the throat to the black breast and flanks. In flight, the black primaries and secondaries were separated from the buff-brown upperwing-coverts by a broad white bar, and contrasted with the bright white underwing; the rump was white, the tail feathers black. Bill and legs were black.

This appears to be the first record of Spur-winged Lapwing for São Tomé and Príncipe: the species is not mentioned by Jones & Tye (2006), nor in the latest country checklist by Dowsett *et al.* (2013). It is also unknown from the other Gulf of Guinea islands (Perez del Val 1996, Perez del Val *et al.* 1997). In West Africa, Spur-winged Lapwing is a common to locally uncommon resident, ranging from southern Mauritania to Sierra Leone east to Chad and northern Central African Republic (Borrow & Demey 2001). A vagrant was photographed in 1977 at Gamba (02°47'S 10°02'E), south-west Gabon (Sergeant 1993; P. Christy pers. comm.). The island of



Figures 1–2. Spur-winged Lapwing / Vanneau éperonné *Vanellus spinosus*, Bom Bom Island Resort, Príncipe, 21 March 2012 (Madalena Patacho)

Príncipe lies *c*.450 km south of the species' known range and 220 km west of Gabon.

In Africa, Spur-winged Lapwing is generally sedentary although it is known to perform intra-continental movements in response to rains and flooding of its habitat (Urban *et al.* 1986, Delany *et al.* 2009). North of the Mediterranean, birds are migratory and regular passage through Cyprus suggests a direct route from the east Mediterranean and a potential sea crossing of 70–220 km, although confirmation is lacking (Cramp & Simmons 1983). It is therefore noteworthy that our bird represents possibly the first evidence that Spur-winged Plovers can cross a stretch of at least 210 km of sea (i.e. the minimum distance from Bioko Island).

In East Africa the species is reportedly expanding its range southwards into southern Tanzania (Baker 1996), Malawi and Zambia (Delany *et al.* 2009), but there is no published evidence as yet that anything similar is occurring in western Africa, thus the bird we describe here, like that recorded in Gabon, must be regarded as a vagrant.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Patrice Christy for his help with information concerning the Gabon sighting. We also thank Helene Bovy for translating the summary into French, and Ron Demey and Alan Tye for their valuable comments on the manuscript.

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Northward range extension for Littoral Rock Thrush *Monticola imerinus* in south-west Madagascar

Charlie J. Gardner[a] *and Louise D. Jasper*[b]

Extension vers le nord de l'aire de répartition du Merle de roche du sub-désert *Monticola imerinus* au sud-ouest de Madagascar. Le Merle de roche du sub-désert *Monticola imerinus* est une espèce endémique de la zone côtière du sud-ouest de Madagascar, mais aucune observation de l'espèce au nord du fleuve Onilahy n'a été confirmée. Nous présentons des photos de l'espèce prises à Salary Nord, étendant son aire de répartition originale de 120 km vers le nord.

Littoral Rock Thrush *Monticola imerinus* is one of two *Monticola* species endemic to Madagascar (Cruaud *et al.* 2011) and one of ten bird species entirely or largely restricted to the South Malagasy spiny forests Endemic Bird Area (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998). A habitat specialist with a highly localised distribution, it occurs only in 'south western coastal bushland' (Moat & Smith 2007), a low-stature vegetation type growing on sandy soils and Tertiary limestone outcrops in the south-west of the island.

The northern limits of Littoral Rock Thrush's distribution are debated. Langrand (1990) states that it occurs as far north as Morombe but notes that the species is 'rather rare' north of Toliara; no geo-referenced records exist, however, from north of the Onilahy River (Raherilalao & Wilmé 2008). Further, it has been suggested that existing sight records from north of the Onilahy River (ZICOMA 1999, Gardner *et al.* 2009) might have been misidentified, as a specimen of Forest Rock Thrush *M. sharpei* has also been collected from this area (Cruaud *et al.* 2011). It therefore is unclear whether the species occurs along the 200 km of coastline between the Onilahy River and Morombe.

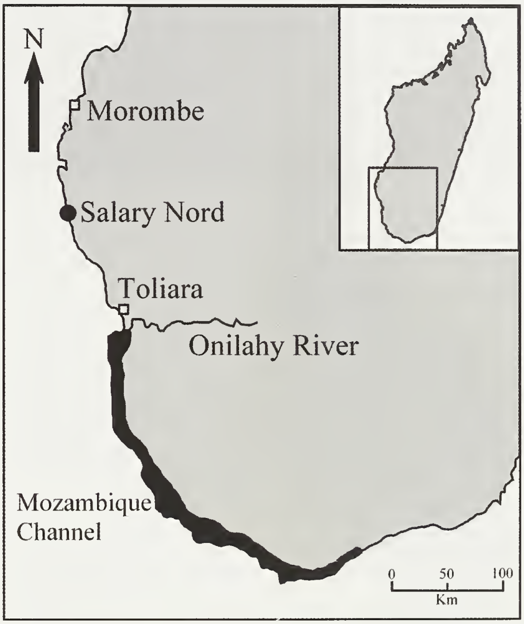

Figure 1. Map of southern Madagascar showing the record of Littoral Rock Thrush *Monticola imerinus* from Salary Nord (black dot), the approximate distribution of geo-referenced records following Raherilalao & Wilmé (2008) (black shading), and other locations mentioned in the text. The inset shows the location of the region within Madagascar.

Carte du sud de Madagascar indiquant l'observation du Merle de roche du sub-désert *Monticola imerinus* à Salary Nord (point noir), la distribution approximative des observations géo-référenciées d'après Raherilalao & Wilmé (2008) (zone noire) et les autres localités mentionnées dans le texte. L'encart montre la localisation de la région à l'intérieur de Madagascar.

Here we present a photographic record of a male and female Littoral Rock Thrush from Salary Nord (22°33'12"S 43°17'31"E), a coastal location on the edge of Mikea National Park between Toliara and Morombe (Fig. 1). The birds were photographed within 50 m of the coast, on the edge of a clearing in thicket vegetation dominated by *Euphorbia stenoclada*, at 18.30 hrs on 29 December 2011. The birds can be clearly distinguished from Forest Rock Thrush by the relatively long, slightly curved bill and the extremely pale orange colour of the male's abdomen (Fig. 2). This record confirms the presence of Littoral Rock Thrush north of the Onilahy River, and extends its known range north by 120 km. It also represents the third distribution extension of range-restricted southern Madagascar

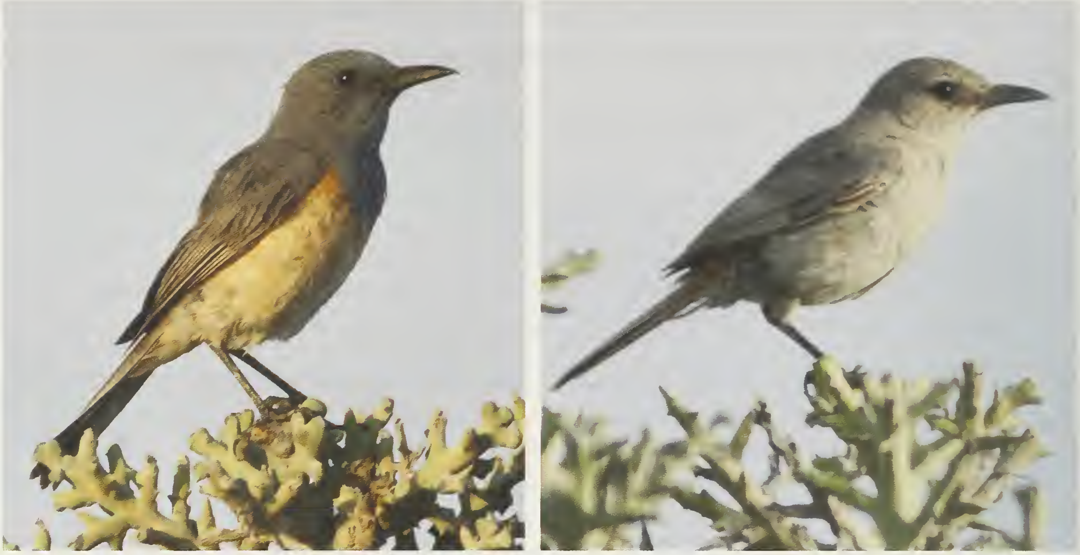

Figure 2. Male (left) and female (right) Littoral Rock Thrush *Monticola imerinus*, Salary Nord, south-west Madagascar, 29 December 2011 (Louise Jasper)

Merle de roche du sub-désert *Monticola imerinus* mâle (à gauche) et femelle, Salary Nord, Madagascar du sud-ouest, 29 décembre 2011 (Louise Jasper)

endemics from the Salary area within the last few years, following the recent observations of Appert's Tetraka *Xanthomixis apperti* (Langrand & von Bechtolsheim 2009) and Verreaux's Coua *Coua verreauxi* (Raselimanana *et al.* 2012).

Acknowledgements

We thank Marie Jeanne Raherilalao for confirming the identification, and Olivier Langrand and Steve Goodman for their comments on the submitted note.

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First record of Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* for St. Helena, South Atlantic

J. C. Hillman[a]*, Gavin Ellick*[a]*, Kevin George*[a] *and Dennis Leo*[a]

Première mention du Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides* pour l'île de Sainte-Hélène, Atlantique Sud. Le premier Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides* pour Sainte-Hélène a été observé et photographié le 9 août 2012, et à plusieures reprises ensuite jusqu'en décembre 2012. Sainte-Hélène se trouve à environ 1.900 km à l'ouest de la côte africaine en Namibie et en Afrique du Sud, où l'espèce niche. Des occasionnels ont précédemment été observés sur d'autres îles Atlantiques, y compris l'Île de l'Ascension, les Îles Canaries et du Cap-Vert, Madère et les Açores.

On 9 August 2012, GE noticed a small, hunched heron in marshy cattle pasture dominated by tall grasses and yam plants in the lower Fisher's Valley, on the east side of St. Helena. It was easily identified as a Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*. Several photographs were taken on this and the next day (Figs. 1–2). The striped head, neck and mantle were characteristic, as were the biscuit-brown wings and back, and white primaries and secondaries, which were evident only in flight. There was some yellow on the long pointed bill and the lores. The eyes and legs were also yellow. The bird was noted over the next four months, until mid-December 2012, always in the same general area of marshy land at the bottom of the valley, and is the first record on St. Helena.

The bird was first observed in the flatter middle section of Fisher's Valley (15°57.6'6.98"S 05°40'31.12"W) below Bradley's, also known as the 'Government Garage'. The valley bottom has been fenced for many years, providing a long narrow strip of pasture in the otherwise arid surroundings of the Prosperous Bay plain in the semi-desert fringe of the island. The vegetation is dominated by grasses and yam *Colocasia esculenta* in the wet valley floor. This results in a long thin strip of 'riverine' vegetation suitable for the species, and probably the most extensive on the whole island. Rarely more than 5 m wide, upstream it has been modified for market gardening, while downstream there are a series of steep rocky waterfalls in the lower gorge before the stream flows into the sea at Prosperous Bay. On most occasions the bird was seen in the

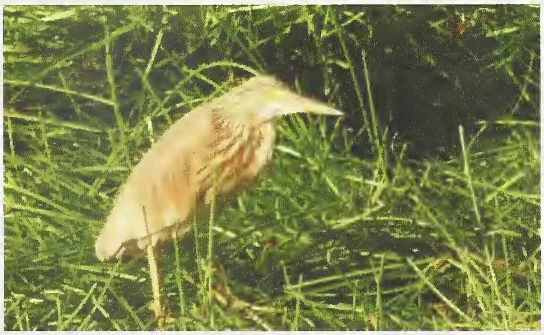

Figure 1. Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* holding the exotic frog *Rana greyii*, the only amphibian on the island, in its bill, Fisher's Valley, St. Helena, August 2012 (Steffen Oppel)

Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides* tenant dans son bec la grenouille exotique *Rana greyii*, le seul amphibien sur l'île, Fisher's Valley, Sainte-Hélène, août 2012 (Steffen Oppel)

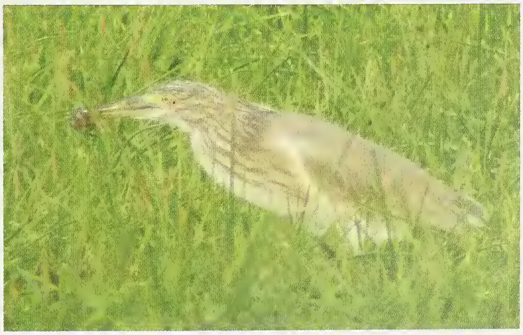

Figure 2. Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*, in marshy grassland, Fisher's Valley, St. Helena, August 2012 (Steffen Oppel)

Crabier chevelu *Ardeola ralloides*, dans une prairie marécageuse, Fisher's Valley, Sainte-Hélène, août 2012 (Steffen Oppel) grassland area, or flying low along the valley. Once it was found roosting in a small leafless tree in the evening.

Squacco Heron is widespread in Africa south of the Sahara, as well as being a common breeder in southern and eastern Europe, east to western Asia and the Middle East, and a vagrant further afield (Kushlan & Hancock 2005, Hockey *et al.* 2005). Two populations are recognised: a relatively sedentary or nomadic African population, and a migratory southern Palearctic-African one (BirdLife International 2013). It has been recorded on the Namibian coast, which is the nearest area of the African mainland to St. Helena, *c.*1,900 km distant (Hockey *et al.* 2005). However, the possibility exists that the bird was a Palearctic migrant overshoot. Squacco Heron is a vagrant to Ascension Island, the Cape Verdes, Madeira and the Azores, and a rare visitor to the Canaries (McCulloch 2004, Clarke 2008, Hazevoet 2012), while the species has also been recorded recently on the Brazilian island of Fernando de Noronha (Silva e Silva & Olmos 2006, Davis 2010).

This is the third vagrant heron species added to the St. Helena bird list in recent years, following Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* and Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii* (Beard 2012, Hillman & Clingham 2012). Other herons recorded on St. Helena are Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (an almost annual visitor), Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (at least six records) and Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (one record) (Rowlands *et al.* 1998, McCulloch 2004). All are postulated to have reached the island on south-east trade winds from a similar location on the African coast.

Acknowledgements

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Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed records published for interest only; **records are mostly from 2013, with a few from earlier dates**. We thank all birders who have sent in their records and urge them to submit full details to the relevant national or regional organisations. It is suggested that observations of each species be compared with relevant literature to set new data in context and that observers who are unfamiliar with the status of birds in a particular country refer to the ABC country checklists (www.africanbirdclub.org/countries/checklists/index.html) or more recent or appropriate sources before submitting records.

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Les observations ci-après sont en majeure partie non confirmées et sont publiées uniquement dans le but d'informer. **La plupart des données sont de 2013 ; quelques-unes sont plus anciennes**. Nous remercions tous les ornithologues qui ont pris la peine de nous faire parvenir leurs données et nous recommandons de les envoyer, dûment documentées, aux organisations nationales ou régionales concernées. Il est conseillé de vérifier le statut des espèces observées dans la littérature appropriée, afin de mettre les nouvelles données en perspective, et de consulter notamment les 'checklists' des pays africains du ABC (www.africanbirdclub.org/countries/checklists/index.html) ou des sources plus récentes ou appropriées.

Angola

Reports from August–November 2013 include the following. An **Orange River Francolin** *Scleroptila gutturalis* (=*levaillantoides*) was observed near Luanda on 24 August—a very northerly record. A **Blue Quail** *Synoicus* (=*Excalfactoria*) *adansonii* was seen near Mount Moco, Huambo Province, on 9 November; this species' status and distribution are poorly known and most records are from scattered localities in central and north-east Angola. A **Pallid Honeyguide** *Indicator meliphilus* and an **African Pitta** *Pitta angolensis* were encountered near Cambondo, Cuanza Norte, on 10 November (*MM*).

Azores

In the period June–December 2013, the following were reported. Several species were observed for the first time in the archipelago, including **Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* (a first-winter female on Corvo on 1 November), **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula* (one on Flores on 21 October), and **White-throated Sparrow** *Zonotrichia albicollis* and **Yellow-throated Warbler** *Setophaga dominica* (both photographed on Corvo on 16–17 October; the second White-throated Sparrow was on Flores on 12 October–1 November). An **Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonorae* at Serra da Tronquiera, São Miguel, on 14 and 23 September, will be another first for the Azores, if accepted.

On 25 August and 3 September, single **Swinhoe's Storm-petrels** *Hydrobates* (=*Oceanodroma*) *monorhis* were seen during a pelagic at the Bank of Fortune, 20 nautical miles east of Graciosa, with a **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* also there on 4 September. An adult **White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus* was at Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, on 2–12 September and (presumably the same individual) at Agua de Pau, São Miguel, on 7 October; it is assumed to be the same individual noted in September / October 2011 on Flores and again in March–April and September 2012 on Terceira, São Jorge and Faial.

Pied-billed Grebes *Podilymbus podiceps* remained on São Miguel and Terceira; an **American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus* was on Corvo on 29 October; a juvenile **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea* on Santa Maria from late October until mid November; **American Great Egrets** *Ardea alba egretta* on Pico (one in late October), Terceira (two on 5 October) and São Miguel (up to two on 7 October–8 November); and a **Great Blue Heron** *A. herodias* on Pico from late October until late December at least, with another moribund on São Miguel on 28 November. **Glossy Ibises** *Plegadis falcinellus* were recorded on São Jorge (one on 5 September), Corvo (up to six in September–December), Flores (up to five in September–October), Terceira (one until 2 November), with a record flock of 22 on Santa Maria on 17–18 December.

Rare waterfowl reported in September–December included **Barnacle Geese** *Branta leucopsis* on Corvo (two on 15 October–3 November); **Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discolor* on Terceira (up to seven) and São Miguel (one); **Green-winged Teal** *A.* (*crecca*) *carolinensis* on Terceira (up to three); **American Black Ducks** *A. rubripes* on Corvo (one) and Flores (two); **American Wigeons** *Mareca* (=*Anas*) *americana* on Terceira (up to ten), Santa Maria (two) and Pico (six); **Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa* (again) on Flores (one); **Ring-necked Ducks** *Aythya collaris* (eight on various islands); **Lesser Scaup** *A. affinis* on São Miguel (one), Faial (two) and Terceira (one); **Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* off Corvo (one); **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* on Terceira (one on 28 October); and **Surf Scoters** *Melanitta perspicillata* on Terceira (up to three) and Faial (one).

The seventh **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* for the Azores was observed at Caminho de Goyanes, São Miguel, on 11 July. A **Sora** *Porzana carolina* was present on Santa Maria on 19 October and an **American Coot** *Fulica americana* (again) at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, from 6 November until at least 7 December. A **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* was at Praia do Almoxarife, Faial, on 10 August and up to two stayed on Ilheu da Praia, Graciosa, from 24 August until at least early September. Two **Tree Pipits** *Anthus trivialis* were claimed from Lagoa do Junco, Terceira, on 15 September, whilst a **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* was at Planalto dos Graminhais, São Miguel, on 23–29 November.

Vagrant Nearctic waders included **Semipalmated Plovers** *Charadrius semipalmatus* on Terceira (1–15 throughout the period) and Graciosa (one on 5 September); a **Killdeer** *C. vociferus* on Pico on 21 December; an **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* on Terceira on 6–21 September and 14–22 November, with another on Santa Maria on 15 November; up to seven **Semipalmated Sandpipers** *Calidris pusilla* (including four at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 2–8 September); three **Least Sandpipers** *C. minutilla*; up to *c.*25 **White-rumped Sandpipers** *C. fuscicollis* across the islands; a **Baird's Sandpiper** *C. bairdii* on Flores on 15 October; a **Western Sandpiper** *C. mauri* on Pico on 9 September; a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *C. (=Tryngites) subruficollis* on Corvo on 9–11 October; nine **Wilson's Snipes** *Gallinago delicata* (including six at Lagoa do Ginjal, Terceira, on 7 September); a **Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, from 2 September until at least 23 December; a **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* also there from September into early November; an **Upland Sandpiper** *Bartramia longicauda* on Flores on 20 October; a **Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca* on Terceira on 19–20 October, with another on Flores on 31 October; up to five **Lesser Yellowlegs** *T. flavipes* on Terceira from mid September into early November; and up to eight **Spotted Sandpipers** *Actitis macularius* on Terceira, São Miguel and Pico.

Other Nearctic vagrants included single pale- and dark-morph **Rough-legged Hawks** *Buteo lagopus sanctjohannis* on Corvo on 1–22 October; single **Mourning Doves** *Zenaida macroura* on Corvo and Flores in October; a **Black-billed Cuckoo** *Coccyzus erythropthalmus* on São Miguel on 9 September; a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** *C. americanus* on Santa Maria on 18 November; and a male **Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus* on Faial on 30 September.

Except where otherwise indicated, all the following Nearctic passerines were recorded on Corvo in October: a **Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor* on 6th; up to two **American Cliff Swallows** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* on 6th–14th (with one on Terceira on 26th); two **American Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus rubescens* on 3rd–7th (with another on Flores on 26th–28th); a **Cedar Waxwing** *Bombycilla cedrorum* on 12th–15th (second record for the Azores); a **Grey-cheeked Thrush** *Catharus minimus* on 14th; an **American Robin** *Turdus migratorius* on 15th (second record); single **Philadelphia Vireos** *Vireo philadelphicus* on 10th–11th and 14th; at least six **Red-eyed Vireos** *V. olivaceus* (with one on Faial on 22nd–23rd); a **Scarlet Tanager** *Piranga olivacea* on 20th; three **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** *Pheucticus ludovicianus*; four **Indigo Buntings** *Passerina cyanea* (with one on Flores on 11th–14th); a **White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys* on 20th–30th (fourth record); three **Bobolinks** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* on 12th (with one on Flores on 31st); three **Black-and-white Warblers** *Mniotilta varia*; up to three **Common Yellowthroats** *Geothlypis trichas* on 6th and 14th–15th; an **American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla* on 8th–12th; up to three **Northern Parulas** *S. americana* on 6th–14th; one or two male **Black-throated Blue Warblers** *S. caerulescens* on 4th–17th; a **Black-throated Green Warbler** *S. virens* on 24th–28th; and a **Myrtle Warbler** *S. coronata* on Flores on 14th (per *Dutch Birding* 35: 337–339 & 388–407; *Birding World* 26: 243, 278, 377, 422 & 462).

Benin

Two **Lesser Moorhens** *Gallinula angulata* were observed at Mare Bali in Pendjari National Park on 29 June 2013 (*JM & SM*).

Botswana

The following were reported from the period July–December 2013. At Mahalapye sewage ponds, 66 **Maccoa Ducks** *Oxyura maccoa* were counted on 27 July (*PDA*). Another good count was that of 191 **Cape Vultures** *Gyps coprotheres* near the breeding colony at Mannyelanong Game Reserve, south of Gaborone, on 1 December (*MG*). At least 1,000 vultures, mainly **White-backed** *G. africanus* and **Lappet-faced** *Torgos tracheliotos*, were poisoned in Botswana during the six-month period (*ST*). A **Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* was observed in a small channel off the Chobe River on 2 August (*GB*). In the Okavango Delta, a **Denham's Bustard** *Ardeotis denhami* was seen in Moremi Game Reserve on 7 September, with another there on 3 December (*EE, WS*). A **Grey Crowned Crane** *Balearica regulorum* at Pete's Pond in Mashatu Game Reserve on 23 October was well outside its normal range. A small flock of **Caspian Plovers** *Charadrius asiaticus* was reported from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve near Letiahau Waterhole on 13 September, with a single at Gaborone Dam on 22 October. A **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* was reported from the Linyanti Swamps, in the north, on 22 October (per *TH*). A

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* was photographed at Lake Ngami on 24 August (*PH*), whilst single **Black-headed** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* and **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** *Larus fuscus* were seen at Lake Xau (=Dow) in July (*CB*).

Grey-backed Sparrow Larks *Eremopterix verticalis* and **Lark-like Buntings** *Emberiza impetuani* were common at Gaborone Dam in October–November (*IW*) and two **Mountain Pipits** *Anthus hoeschi* were photographed there on 2 November (*IW, CB*). A **Collared Palm Thrush** *Cichladusa arquata* and a **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* were seen at Nata Lodge, in the north of the Makgadikgadi Pans, on 16 November (per *TH*); the former species was first recorded at Nata village in November 2004. A shrike that was initially reported as a **Souza's Shrike** *Lanius souzae*, at Kasane Sewage Works on 2 June (see *Bull. ABC* 20: 218), was in fact an immature **Fiscal Shrike** *L. collaris* (*ST*).

Burkina Faso

A **Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus* was claimed from Koubri Monastery, south-east of Ouagadougou, on 24 October 2013; this species would be an addition to the country list (*RS*).

Burundi

A **Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan* was photographed in Rusizi National Park in early November 2012 (*YG & AMa* per *GC*); this is perhaps the same individual that was reported subsequently in Uganda and Malaŵi (see below).

Cameroon

Records from the period August–December 2013 include the following. On 15 October, a male **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* was discovered on the small lake of Parcours Vita, on the outskirts of Yaoundé, where it remained until the year-end at least. The bird was shy and had normal plumage (Fig. 1); this is the first documented record for Cameroon (*ML & MvB*). A **Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* flew over Yaoundé on 24 November (*RF*); there are just two previous records so far south, one from Yaoundé in the late 1960s and another from Dja Faunal Reserve in 1999. A **Red-chested Owlet** *Glaucidium tephronotum* was heard on three occasions at Yaoundé Golf Club in August–September; on 6 October, a **Pearl-spotted Owlet** *G. perlatum* responded to playback of the song of Red-chested and was subsequently seen and heard until late December (Fig. 2); the closest known population of Pearl-spotted Owlet is on the Adamawa Plateau, *c.*400 km to the north. A **Zenker's Honeyguide** *Melignomon zenkeri* was singing near Nkoteng, 80 km north-east of Yaoundé, on 12 October (Fig. 3). On 27 October, a **Speckle-breasted Woodpecker** *Dendropicos poecilolaemus* was photographed at Yaoundé Golf Club (Fig. 4); this is a rare bird in Cameroon and the most recent record is from 2008 at the same site.

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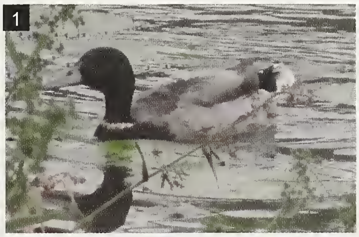

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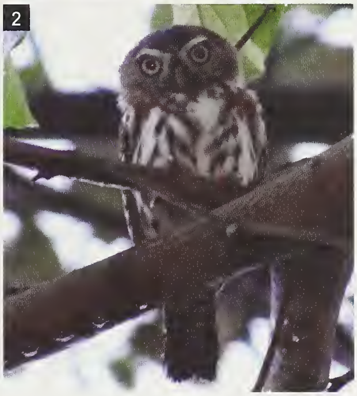

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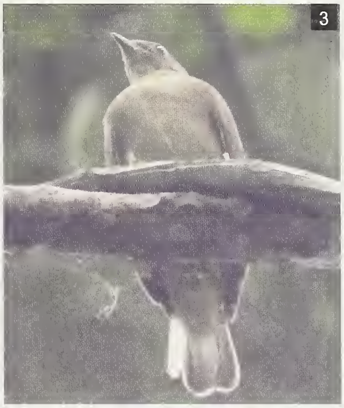

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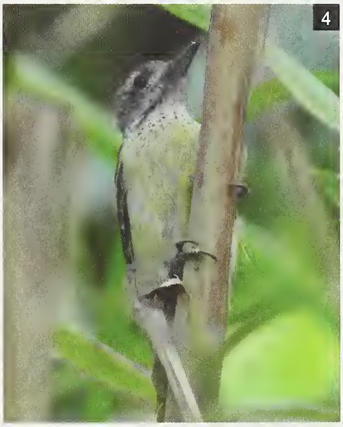


Figure 1. Male Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, Parcours Vita, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 22 December 2013 (Marc Languy)

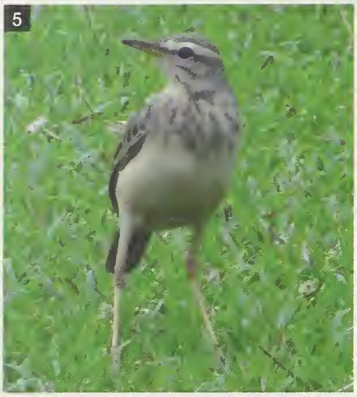
Canard colvert *Anas platyrhynchos* mâle, Parcours Vita, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 22 décembre 2013 (Marc Languy)

Figure 2. Pearl-spotted Owlet / Chevêchette perlée *Glaucidium perlatum*, Yaoundé Golf Club, Cameroon, 8 December 2013 (Marc Languy)

Figure 3. Zenker's Honeyguide / Indicateur de Zenker *Melignomon zenkeri*, near Nkoteng, Cameroon, 12 October 2013 (Marc Languy)

Figure 4. Speckle-breasted Woodpecker / Pic à poitrine tachetée *Dendropicos poecilolaemus*, Yaoundé Golf Club, Cameroon, 27 October 2013 (Marc Languy)

A small group of **Long-legged Pipits** *Anthus pallidiventris* was discovered at Yaoundé Golf Club on 6 October; several, probably including breeding pairs, were regularly seen in October–December (Fig. 5). More were observed at Ebogo and near Mbalmayo during the period, confirming the species' north-easterly expansion (*ML & MvB*). A **Northern Wheatear**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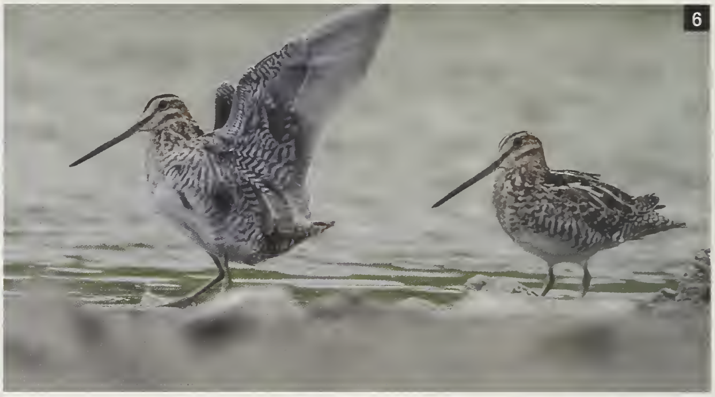
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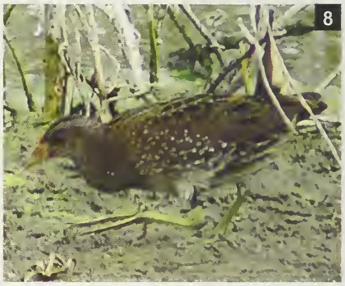
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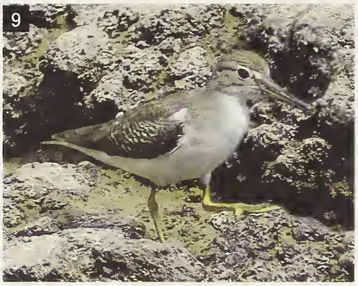
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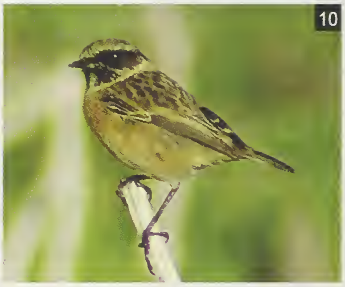
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Figure 5. Long-legged Pipit / Pipit à longues pattes *Anthus pallidiventris*, Yaoundé Golf Club, Cameroon, 9 October 2013 (Marc Languy)

Figure 6. Wilson's Snipes / Bécassines de Wilson *Gallinago delicata*, La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands, 26 October 2013 (Ramón Fernández)

Figure 7. Female Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands, 5 August 2013 (Rubén Barone)

Canard colvert *Anas platyrhynchos* femelle, La Laguna, Tenerife, Îles Canaries, 5 août 2013 (Rubén Barone)

Figure 8. Spotted Crake / Marouette ponctuée *Porzana porzana*, Tejina ponds, Tenerife, Canary Islands, 12 September 2013 (Rubén Barone)

Figure 9. Spotted Sandpiper / Chevalier grivelé *Actitis macularius*, San Miguel de Abona, Tenerife, Canary Islands, 27 October 2013 (Rubén Barone)

Figure 10. Male European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*, La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands, 1 November 2013 (Rubén Barone)

Tarier pâtre *Saxicola rubicola* mâle, La Laguna, Tenerife, Îles Canaries, 1 novembre 2013 (Rubén Barone)

Oenanthe oenanthe was in a clearing south of Deng Deng National Park, eastern Cameroon, on 4 October (*RF*); there are very few records from central and southern Cameroon, and none so far south in the east. **Sooty Chats** *Myrmecocichla nigra* were found south of Nkoteng on 12 October; these are the southernmost for Cameroon. A male **Verreaux's Batis** *Batis minima* was displaying to a female near Ebogo on 14 December. At Yaoundé Golf Club, a pair of **Orange-tufted Sunbirds** *Cinnyris bouvieri* was seen on 27 October and again on 19 December, at the southern edge of their distribution in the country (*ML & MvB*).

Canary Islands

Two species were recorded for the first time in the archipelago: **Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* (one at the airport of La Palma from 4 October to at least mid-December 2013) and **Wilson's Snipe** *Gallinago delicata* (two at the reservoirs of Tejina and Bajamar, La Laguna, Tenerife, from 17 October until the year-end; Fig. 6).

Other records from June–December 2013 include the following. A **Cape Verde Shearwater** *Calonectris edwardsii* was trapped in the Cory's Shearwater *C. borealis* colony on Montaña Clara islet, north of Lanzarote, on 28 June. A **Swinhoe's Storm-petrel** *Hydrobates* (=*Oceanodroma*) *monorhis* was reported from the Lanzarote to Gran Canaria ferry on 13 August. On Lanzarote, a pair of **Red-billed Tropicbirds** *Phaethon aethereus* remained at a nest at Órzola from 9 April to at least 19 July; a chick was seen on the last date. A **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* was at a reservoir near El Médano, Tenerife, from 21

September to 10 October. A **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* flew south over Telde, Gran Canaria, on 14 December. A female **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* remained on a reservoir between Tejina and Valle de Guerra, La Laguna, Tenerife, between 5 August and 17 November (Fig. 7), and a male **Green-winged Teal** *A. (crecca) carolinensis* was at Embalse de Armeñime, Adeje, Tenerife, on 9–14 December. A **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus* flew over Los Rodeos plains, La Laguna, Tenerife, on 27 September. A **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* was at Tejina ponds, Tenerife, on 12 September–24 October (Fig. 8).

Rare waders on Lanzarote included an **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* at Salinas de Cocoteros on 12–13 October; two **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos* in October; a **White-rumped Sandpiper** *C. fuscicollis* at Salinas de Janubio on 29 August; and a **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* at Ancones on 10 August, with another at San Miguel de Abona, Tenerife, in October–December (Fig. 9). A **Baird's Sandpiper** *Calidris bairdii* was claimed from El Hierro on 8 October. On Gran Canaria, a first-winter **Audouin's Gull** *Ichthyaetus audouinii* was observed at San Bartolomé de Tirajana on 9 November.

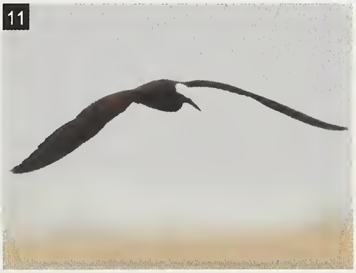
Two **Laughing Doves** *Streptopelia senegalensis* were at La Laguna, Tenerife, on 16 October. A **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* was discovered on El Hierro on 8 October. On Tenerife, a male **European Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola* was at La Laguna on 1 November (Fig. 10), whilst three **Ring Ouzels** *Turdus torquatus* were in Teide National Park on 5 December. On La Graciosa, an **African Desert Warbler** *Sylvia deserti* was reported on 30–31 October, and ten **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* on 2 November. Eleven **Yellow-browed Warblers** were counted on Lanzarote in December (per *RB*; *Dutch Birding* 35: 255, 337 & 391; *Birding World* 26: 278, 331, 424, 463 & 499).

Congo-Brazzaville

A **White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus* flew around a research vessel off Congo on 28 and 30 October 2012; this would be an addition to the country list. Other species recorded from the same vessel include **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*, **Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini* and unidentified terns, whilst a **Melodious / Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta / icterina* was photographed on deck (per *JMI*).

Côte d'Ivoire

The following records are from the period June 2013–January 2014. Highlights include the first **Black Noddy** *Anous minutus* for the country at the Bandama River mouth, near Vieux Lahou, on 25 August (Fig. 11), a **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* at Assouinde, near the Ghanaian border, on 18–19 January (third Ivorian record; Fig. 12), the discovery of a **Greater Swamp Warbler** *Acrocephalus rufescens* at Grand Bassam on 14 July (a new locality for this patchily distributed species; Fig. 13), and the second Ivorian record of **Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca (=Anas) penelope* at Assouinde marsh on 18 January (Fig. 14), the same site at which the first was recorded a year ago.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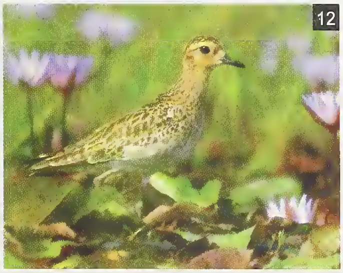
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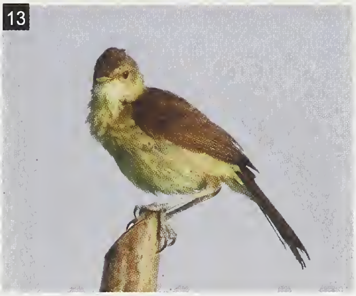
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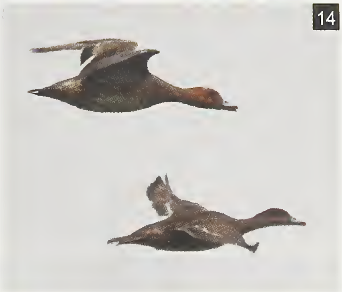
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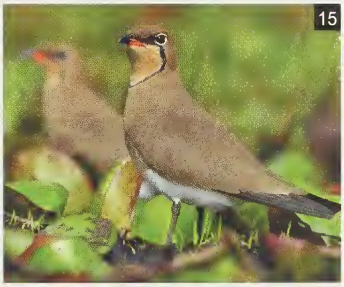
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Figure 11. Black Noddy / Noddi noir *Anous minutus*, Vieux Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire, 25 August 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 12. Pacific Golden Plover / Pluvier fauve *Pluvialis fulva*, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 19 January 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 13. Greater Swamp Warbler / Rousserolle des cannes *Acrocephalus rufescens*, Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, 14 July 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 14. Eurasian Wigeons / Canards siffleurs *Mareca penelope*, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 18 January 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 15. Collared Pratincole / Glaréole à collier *Glareola pratincola*, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 25 January 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

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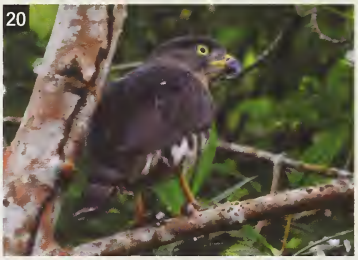

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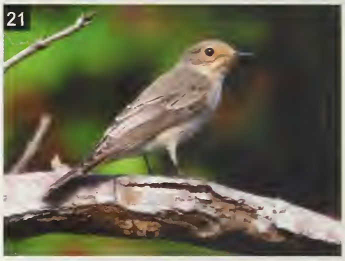

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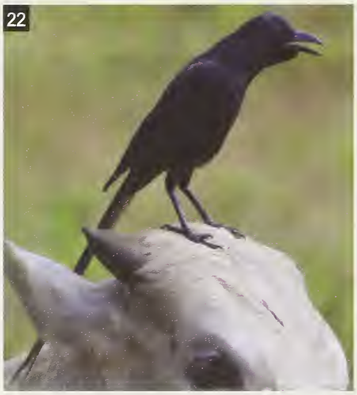

Figure 16. Common Redshank / Chevalier gambette *Tringa totanus*, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 12 January 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 17. Hartlaub's Ducks / Canards de Hartlaub *Pteronetta hartlaubii*, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 25 January 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 18. Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* nest, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 19 January 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

Nid de Vanneau éperonné *Vanellus spinosus*, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 19 janvier 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 19. Kentish Plover / Gravelot à collier interrompu *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Vieux Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire, 15 December 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 20. Congo Serpent Eagle / Serpentaire du Congo *Dryotriorchis spectabilis*, Azagny National Park, Côte d'Ivoire, 4 August 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 21. Spotted Flycatcher / Gobemouche gris *Muscicapa striata*, Azagny National Park, Côte d'Ivoire, 26 October 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

Figure 22. Piapiac / Piapiac africain *Ptilostomus afer*, near Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, 2 November 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

Other noteworthy records from the Assouinde area include three **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* on 12 January and at least 16 on 25 January (Fig. 15), two male and three female **Northern Pintails** *Anas acuta* on 7 December, a female **Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* on 25 January, and a **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* on 12–18 January (Fig. 16). **African Darter** *Anhinga rufa*, a scarce species in Côte d'Ivoire nowadays, is regularly present at Assouinde, with 1–2 observed in October–January; one also flew over the lagoon at Grand Bassam on 13 January. **Hartlaub's Ducks** *Pteronetta hartlaubii* were also regularly observed at this site throughout the period (Fig. 17). Although **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* is rather scarce in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly on the coast, some appear to be resident at Assouinde marsh: since a first visit in January 2013, at least 19 individuals have been present and a nest with three eggs was discovered on 19 January 2014 (Fig. 18). Two birds were also photographed at Kossou Dam, in the centre of the country, on 26 July. At the coastal lagoon of Vieux Lahou, *c.*150 km west of Abidjan, a **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* was observed on 25 August and a **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* on 15 December (Fig. 19). At nearby Azagny National Park, a **Congo Serpent Eagle** *Dryotriorchis spectabilis*, photographed on 4 August (Fig. 20), and a **Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* on 26 October (Fig. 21) were additions to the park list. One or two **Eurasian Oystercatchers** *Haematopus ostralegus* were regularly seen at Vieux Lahou in August–November. A flock of six **Piapiac** *Ptilostomus afer*, including an immature, was accompanying cattle near Bouake on 2 November (Fig. 22), well south of their known range. The small group of 3–4 **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus* found near Abidjan International Airport in May 2013 was still there in January (*LS*).

DR Congo

In September 2013, the following noteworthy species were recorded at Sakania, in extreme south-eastern Katanga Province, near the border

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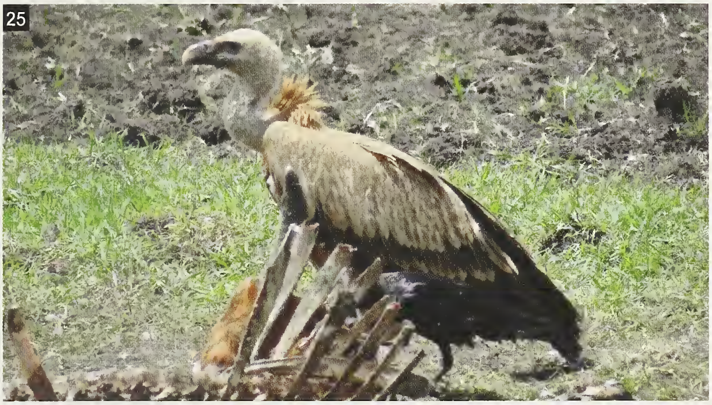

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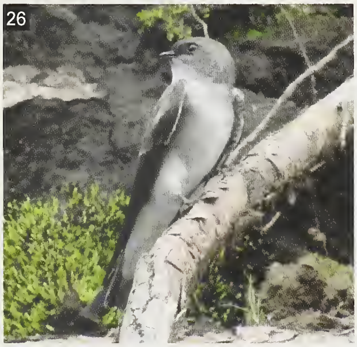

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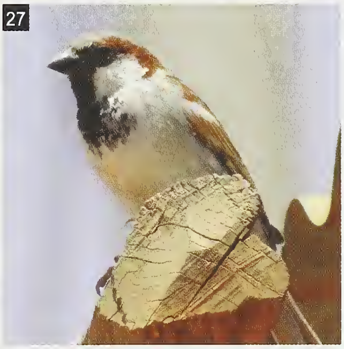

Figure 23. Black Stork / Cigogne noire *Ciconia nigra*, Sakania, Katanga, DR Congo, 22 September 2013 (Nigel Voaden)

Figure 24. Greater Spotted Eagle / Aigle criard *Clanga clanga*, Sabober Plains, between Mount Fantalle and Lake Basaaka, Metehara, Ethiopia, 8 November 2013 (Nigel Birch)

Figure 25. Griffon Vulture / Vautour fauve *Gyps fulvus*, east of Robe, Bale area, Ethiopia, 10 May 2013 (Kai Gedeon)

Figure 26. Rock Martin / Hirondelle isabelline *Ptyonoprogne fuligula obsoleta* (=Pale Crag Martin / Hirondelle du désert), Bale Mountains, Ethiopia, 11 May 2013 (Kai Gedeon)

Figure 27. House Sparrow / Moineau domestique *Passer domesticus*, Megado, south-west of Mega, Ethiopia, 23 May 2013 (Kai Gedeon)

with Zambia. A **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* photographed on 22nd (Fig. 23) appears to be the first for the province: the species is not mentioned in Louette & Hasson (2011. *Birds of Katanga*), whilst a **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* on 2nd is apparently just the second record for Katanga, the first having been photographed on the Lulua River at Tshibamba on 13 October 2008. A **Lark-like Bunting** *Emberiza impetuani* was present again on 15th; presumably the same individual was photographed at this locality in May (*cf. Bull. ABC* 20: 222) (*NV*).

Egypt

The first **Grey-necked Bunting** *Emberiza buchanani* for Egypt was photographed at Hurghada on 29 March 2013, whilst two **African Openbill Storks** *Anastomus lamelligerus* photographed at Kom Ombo on 31 May constitute the second record for the country; the first was at Luxor on 26 May 2009 (*Bull. ABC* 17: 117).

In July 2013, the following were reported. At Abu Simbel, two **Pink-backed Pelicans** *Pelecanus rufescens*, >100 **Yellow-billed Storks** *Mycteria ibis*, six **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* and an **African Mourning Dove** *Streptopelia decipiens* were present on 19th–22nd. Two **Three-banded Plovers** *Charadrius tricollaris* were found at a new site near Aswan on 19th. On 25th, the first breeding of **Saunders's Tern** *Sternula saundersi* was confirmed at Ras Sudr, Sinai, where 20–25 pairs and a few young were photographed (the species was first found there in July 2012). Up to 50 **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* were observed at Sandafa, Minya, on 24th (per *Dutch Birding* 35: 255, 337–339; *Birding World* 26: 278).

Ethiopia

A **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga* was photographed on the Sabober Plains, between Mount Fantalle and Lake Basaaka, Metehara, on 8 November 2013 (Fig. 24; *NBi*). A **Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* was observed east of Robe, Bale area (07°23'09"N 40°8'26"E) on 10 May

(Fig. 25); this is the southernmost record, according to Ash & Atkins (2009. *Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea*). A pair of **Peregrine Falcons** *Falco peregrinus* of the subspecies *minor* was seen at their nesting site, with nestlings calling, near Mega (04°7'18"N 38°14'52"E) on 19 May; there are apparently just two definite breeding records for Ethiopia 'presumably [of] *minor*'. About ten **Rock Martins** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* of the subspecies *obsoleta* (=Pale Crag Martin) were in a mixed colony with Black Saw-wings *Psalidoprogne pristoptera* in the Bale Mountains (06°44'57"N 39°42'52"E) on 11 May (Fig. 26). Surprisingly, the birds were visiting burrows like *Riparia* martins. All appeared much paler below than *P. f. fusciventris*; the occurrence of this race in Ethiopia has not been documented to date (*cf.* Ash & Atkins: 'may also occur'). At least four pairs of **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus* were in Megado, south-west of Mega (03°53'45"N 38°13'18"E) on 23 May (Fig. 27); a female was leaving a nest in the roof of a hut. On 24 May, at least one pair of House Sparrows was seen entering a nest in a roof at Dubluk (04°21'58"N 38°16'46"E; *KG*). These are the first records of House Sparrow in southern Ethiopia; Ash & Atkins (2009) mention none, but the species was found in the extreme north-west, at the Sudan border, in July 2011.

Equatorial Guinea

Reports from a visit to mainland Equatorial Guinea and Bioko in November 2013 include the following. A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* at the Aeropuerto de Bata appears to be a new species for the country list—it is not mentioned in the ABC checklist of Equatorial Guinea (Dowsett *et al.* 2013). A **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* foraging at the edge of Altos de Nsork on 27 November was a first for the Región Continental.

On the island of Bioko, a **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* was observed on Pico Biao; Pérez del Val (1996. *Las Aves de Bioko*) mentions only two previous records. A **Slender-billed Greenbul** *Stelgidillas gracilirostris* at Moka, at *c*.1,200 m, was noteworthy, as Pérez del Val (1996) states that the species occurs only up to 400 m. Also there were **Black-capped Apalis** *Apalis nigriceps* and **Dark-backed Weaver** *Ploceus bicolor* (*JC*).

Gabon

In July 2013, *c*.60 **Greater Flamingos** *Phoenicopterus roseus* (a recent addition to the Gabon list) and *c*.50 **Lesser Flamingos** *Phoeniconaias minor* were observed at the Moka River on 13th. A male **Verreaux's** (=Gabon) **Batis** *Batis minima* was nest-building along the Bélinga Road on 21st (Fig. 28); the nest is hitherto undescribed (*NB*).

The Gambia

The second **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* for the country was at Kartong Bird Observatory, Western Division, on 25 December 2013 (*JCr*); the first was observed at Kaur, in February 1994. Also there was the second **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* from 29 December until early February at least (Fig. 29)—the first was on 4 September 2007 (*LG*); there are just two other records from West Africa, from Sierra Leone and on São Nicolau, Cape Verde Islands.

Ghana

Records from the period November 2013–January 2014 include the following. The most remarkable report was that of a first-winter **Audouin's Gull** *Ichthyaetus*

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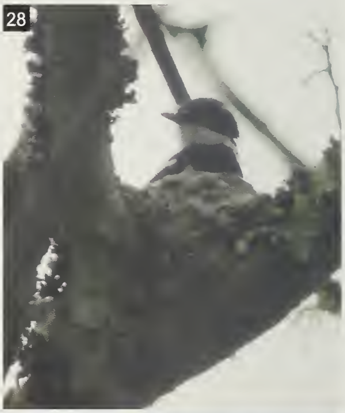

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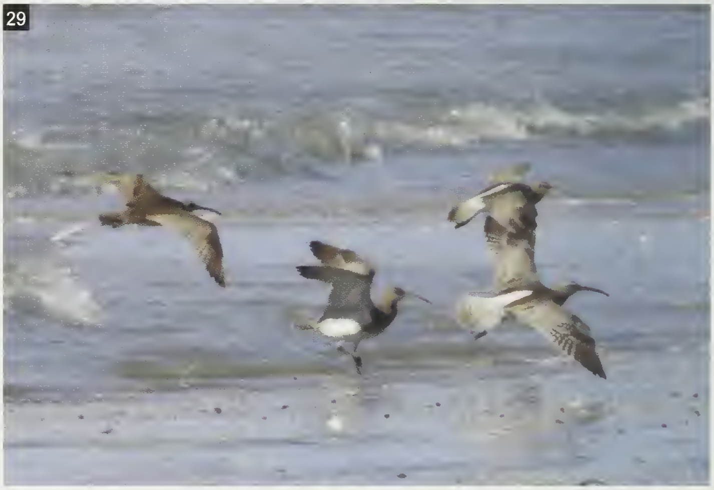
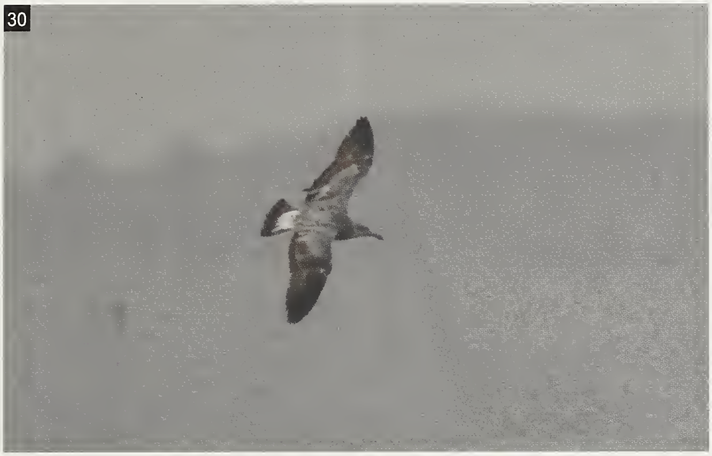


Figure 28. Male Verreaux's Batis *Batis minima* nest-building, Bélinga Road, Gabon, 21 July 2013 (Nik Borrow)

Pririt de Verreaux *Batis minima* mâle en train de construire un nid, route de Bélinga, Gabon, 21 juillet 2013 (Nik Borrow)

Figure 29. Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* (left) with Eurasian Whimbrels *N. phaeopus*, Kartong Bird Observatory, Western Division, The Gambia, 29 December 2013 (Lee Gregory)

Courlis hudsonien *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* (à gauche) avec des Courlis corlieux *N. phaeopus*, Kartong Bird Observatory, Western Division, The Gambia, 29 décembre 2013 (Lee Gregory)



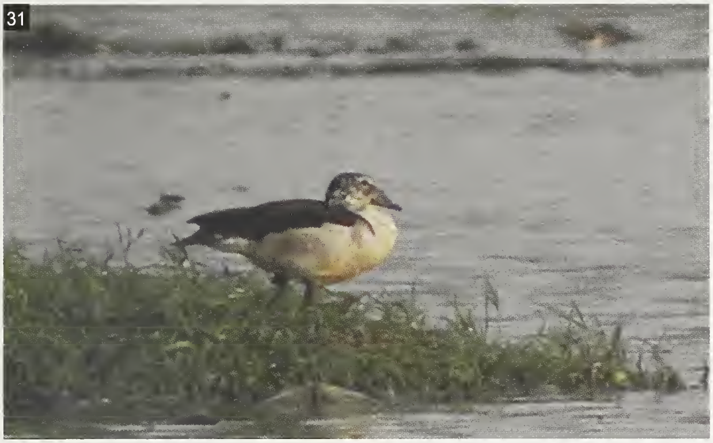


Figure 30. First-winter Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii*, Muni Lagoon, near Winneba, Ghana, 13 January 2014 (Aidan Kelly)

Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaetus audouinii* de premier hiver, Muni Lagoon, près de Winneba, Ghana, 13 janvier 2014 (Aidan Kelly)

Figure 31. Female Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*, Sakumono Lagoon, Ghana, 14 January 2014 (Aidan Kelly)

Canard à bosse *Sarkidiornis melanotos* femelle, Sakumono Lagoon, Ghana, 14 janvier 2014 (Aidan Kelly)

audouinii observed in a flock of Royal *Thalasseus maximus* and Sandwich Terns *T. sandvicensis* at Muni Lagoon, near Winneba, on 13 January (Fig. 30; *AK*); this is a quite unexpected first for Ghana, as the species has not previously been reported south of Senegambia (full details will be published in *Bull. ABC*).

A **White-crested Tiger Heron** *Tigriornis leucolopha* appeared to be displaying to a second bird in Nsuta Forest on 2 December. At Sakumono Lagoon, 17 **Glossy Ibises** *Plegadis falcinellus* were present on 28 November (*DH*). Also there, on 14 January, were a female **Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* (apparently just the second coastal report in recent years; Fig. 31) and a female **Common Teal** *Anas crecca* (only the fifth report) (*AK*). A subadult **African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* and three **Rüppell's Vultures** *Gyps rueppelli* were in Mole National Park (=NP) on 10–11 December (*DH*). Excellent views of a **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* were obtained from the canopy walkway at Kakum NP on 8 January (*AK*); this species occurs mostly on passage through Ghana, especially on its spring migration. Another was observed at Shai Hills on 26 November (*DH*). An adult and two juvenile **Lesser Moorhens** *Gallinula angulata* were at a wetland near the Nasia River on 14 December (*DE*). On 29 December, three **Eurasian Oystercatchers** *Haematopus ostralegus* were photographed at Winneba Lagoon (*DH*). An **Egyptian Plover** *Pluvianus aegyptius* chick and at least five adults were observed on the Volta River on 29 November; this is the first breeding record for the country (*CT*). A **Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* was photographed at Tono Dam on 13 December (*DH*). Three **Rosy Bee-eaters** *Merops malimbicus* were seen in degraded farmland near Kakum NP on 9 November, whilst a **Northern Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus erythrorhynchus* was at Pepease, near Abetifi, in the Mampongtin Range, on 17 November (*RS*). A **Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* was observed near Opro River Forest Reserve, north of Kumasi, on 5 January (*AK*).

At Odwenanoma Mountain, north of Nkawkaw, two **Brown-chested Alethes** *Alethe poliocephala* were mist-netted in November (*RS*). Two or three **Rufous Scrub Robins** *Cercothrichas galactotes* were noted in *Acacia* scrub near the White Volta in the north-east (*DE*) and two **Western Bonelli's Warblers** *Phylloscopus bonelli* in thickets at Tono Dam on 13 December (*DH*). A **Gambaga Flycatcher** *Muscicapa gambagae* was photographed on Brugbani road, Mole NP, on 11 December (*DH*). At least 50 **Pied Flycatchers** *Ficedula hypoleuca* were counted along a 4-km transect at Mole NP on 7 November (*RS*). At Pepease, a pair of **Western Violet-backed Sunbirds** *Anthreptes longuemarei* was seen on 17 November, with at least five pairs of **Variable Sunbirds** *Cinnyris venustus* breeding there on 16 December (*RS*); a male was also seen at Shai Hills on 26 November (*DH*). Two **Forest Penduline Tits** *Anthoscopus flavifrons* were recorded at Nsuta Forest on

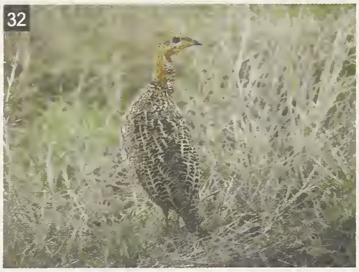


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Figure 32. Red-winged Francolin / Francolin de Levaillant *Scleroptila levaillantii*, Masai Mara, Kenya, 29 October 2013 (Nik Borrow)

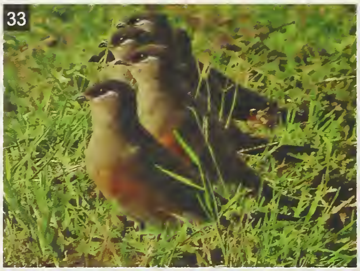

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Figure 33. Madagascar Pratincole / Glaréole malgache *Glareola ocularis*, Bunyala Rice Irrigation Scheme, Kenya, 17 August 2013 (Martin Odino)

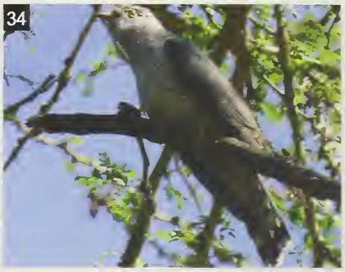

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Figure 34. Madagascar Cuckoo / Coucou de Madagascar *Cuculus rochii*, Naivasha, Kenya, 6 October 2013 (Brian Finch)

4 December. Also in December, a group of ten **Magpie Mannikins** *Lonchura fringilloides* were again seen feeding on the seeds of Chinese Bamboo *Bambusa vulgaris* at the same place in Bobiri as in 2012 (*Bull. ABC* 20: 223), when this behaviour was first reported (*DH*).

Kenya

The following reports are from May–December 2013. Two **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* chicks observed in Nairobi National Park (=NP) on 6 June constitute a rare confirmed breeding record for this well-watched site. Two **Madagascar Pond Herons** *Ardeola idae* were noted at Lake Kwenia, near Magadi, on 1 June; records from the southern Rift Valley are scarce. An adult **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* was observed in Nairobi NP on 29 July; the early date suggests an over-summering individual, which is highly unusual. Also there, on 23 July, was a **Woolly-necked Stork** *C. episcopus*—a rare bird for Nairobi. A **Western Banded Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinerascens* was found at Imenti Forest, Meru, on 10 November; this species is a rarity east of the Rift Valley. An unseasonal **Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis* in the Rift Valley west of Ngong Hills on 15 September was an unusual location for this more easterly migrant. A **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga* was at a carcass with vultures in Nairobi NP on 2 December (*CJ*). Two pairs of **Red-winged Francolins** *Scleroptila levaillantii* were seen in the Masai Mara on 29 October (Fig. 32; *NB*). A male **Striped Crake** *Amaurornis* (=*Aenigmatolimnas*) *marginalis*, a rarely recorded intra-African migrant, was foraging on a garden lawn in Naivasha on 24 June.

A **Bronze-winged Courser** *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* at Nairobi NP on 25 June is the first record for the park. **Madagascar Pratincoles** *Glareola ocularis* were reported from Nairobi Race Course on 22 June (one) and Bunyala Rice Irrigation Scheme on 17 August (>20; Fig. 33); the western record is of special interest, as inland records are very rare. A flock of *c*.250 **Pacific Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis fulva* flying south over Watamu on 25 September represents the most southerly record of any significant number in East Africa (and possibly Africa as a whole). A **Sanderling** *Calidris alba* in Nairobi NP on 30 September is the first confirmed record for the park. An immature **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* off Kisite Island on 24 July is the first Kenyan record since 1995. An adult **Heuglin's Gull** *Larus heuglini* of the race *taimyrensis* was identified on Lake Naivasha on 16 May—a rare record for this race, particularly inland. On 6 December, a **Lesser Noddy** *Anous tenuirostris* was observed at Kisite Mpunguti Marine Park.

A pair of **Black-faced Sandgrouse** *Pterocles decoratus* with two chicks in Nairobi NP on 29 July constitutes the first breeding record for Nairobi County. An apparently territorial **Black Cuckoo** *Cuculus clamosus* with characteristics of the western race *gabonensis* in Tsavo West NP on 6 December is extremely odd given the very eastern locality and the dry habitat. A **Madagascar Cuckoo** *C. rochii* was photographed at Naivasha on 6 October (Fig. 34); this is a very rare bird in Kenya, especially in the Rift Valley. Several swifts photographed in the Rift Valley south of Ngong Hills on 15 September were thought to be **Pallid Swifts** *Apus pallidus;* this would constitute the first record for Kenya, if accepted by the East African Rarities Committee, although the species is occasionally reported. A **Swamp Nightjar** *Caprimulgus natalensis* was photographed near Talek, Masai Mara, on 10 June—a rare record away from the species' usual range north of Kisumu. At Hog Ranch, Nairobi, a male **Pennant-winged Nightjar** *C.* (=*Macrodipteryx*) *vexillarius* was flushed on 17 August. A **Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*, probably of the race *waibeli*, was encountered in Nairobi NP on 10 June and an individual of the same subspecies was apparently collecting food to feed nestlings on 25 August; these are very southerly records for this race and even more surprising if the latter bird was breeding. A **Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*, a rarity in Kenya, was observed in the Kerio Valley on 14 November.

In Tsavo West NP, **Friedmann's Larks** *Mirafra pulpa* were displaying on 25 May; the status and distribution of this enigmatic species are still little understood. A **Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* ringed at Ngulia on 2 December was only the tenth trapped at this

site since 1969; the species is rare in Kenya. A male **Black-and-white Flycatcher** *Bias musicus* was calling at Kagumoni, Meru, on 27 June; this species is rarely reported nowadays. A pair of **Grey-headed Sparrows** *Passer griseus suahelicus* in the Rift Valley next to the northern limit of the Ngong Hills on 25 August, represents a probable range extension towards Nairobi. A male **Green-winged Pytilia** on the edge of Ngong Hills at >2,000 m was well above its normal altitudinal limit (*CJ*).
The eagle photographed at Lake Nakuru on 10 March 2013 and claimed to be an Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (*Bull. ABC* 20: 224, Fig. 27), has been re-identified as a Tawny Eagle *A. rapax* (see Corrigendum below).

Liberia

An expedition to eastern Liberia conducted in February–March 2013 to search for the mysterious **Liberian Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus leucolepis*, sponsored by the ABC and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife UK partner), was unsuccessful in locating the species, but recorded some others of interest. Eight species were new for the two quarter-degree grid cells targeted by the expedition (that containing Zwedru and the one north of it; *cf.* Gatter 1997. *Birds of Liberia*), including **Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*, **Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis* and **Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys*, all in Zwedru town. **Brown Nightjars** *Veles binotatus* were heard and recorded in Cavalla Forest, north-west of Zwedru (sound-recordings have been uploaded to xeno-canto.org). Other new grid-cell records from the Cavalla Forest were **Yellow-footed Honeyguide** *Melignomon eisentrauti*, **White-throated Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus albigularis*, **Black-capped Apalis** *Apalis nigriceps* and **Grey-throated Flycatcher** *Myioparus griseigularis*.

Five globally threatened species were observed. Groups of **White-breasted Guineafowl** *Agelastes meleagrides*, including a flock of *c*.8, were seen in three well-separated locations. **Timneh Parrots** *Psittacus* (*erithacus*) *timneh* were seen daily, but in small numbers (largest count was of ten on 22 February); they are reportedly trapped to be sold across the border in Côte d'Ivoire. **Brown-cheeked Hornbill** *Bycanistes cylindricus* and **Yellow-casqued Hornbill** *Ceratogymna elata* were reasonably common in Cavalla Forest, the latter being observed on most days. **Yellow-bearded Greenbul** *Criniger olivaceus* was not uncommon in closed-canopy forest. Five Near Threatened species were also observed: **Crowned Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus*, **Green-tailed Bristlebill** *Bleda eximius*, **Rufous-winged Illadopsis** *Illadopsis rufescens*, **Copper-tailed Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis cupreocauda* and **Red-fronted Antpecker** *Parmoptila rubrifrons*.

Other records of interest from Cavalla Forest included **Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash*, **Spot-breasted Ibis** *B. olivacea*, **Hartlaub's Duck** *Pteronetta hartlaubii*, **Bat Hawk** *Macheiramphus alcinus*, **Long-tailed Hawk** *Urotriorchis macrourus*, **Forest Wood-hoopoe** *Phoeniculus castaneiceps*, **Black Dwarf Hornbill** *Tockus hartlaubi*, **African Piculet** *Sasia africana* and **Brown-chested Alethe** *Alethe poliocephala*.

Elsewhere in Liberia, **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus* were observed in small numbers at Roberts International Airport, Monrovia, and at Robertsport. **Ethiopian Swallows** *Hirundo aethiopica* were also seen at Roberts International Airport and were common in Monrovia (*BP, LF, EL, TG & FM*).

Libya

The second **Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* for the country was photographed at Tajura, near Tripoli, on 7 June and was still present on 17 June; the first was collected in April 1931 (per *Dutch Birding* 35: 261).

Madagascar

A downy juvenile **Madagascar Rail** *Rallus madagascariensis* in the company of at least one adult at Mananara Lodge on 29 November 2013 differed in some respects from published descriptions (Safford & Hawkins 2013: 357) in having a very obvious medium pink base to the maxilla, no pale patch on the rear ear-coverts and lacking any evidence of barring on the underparts (Fig. 35); there seems to be confusion as to whether the published description truly refers to the downy young or not, given that it mentions the presence of feathers on some tracts. On 14 November, a winter-plumaged **Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* was observed on the crossing to the Masoala Peninsula, but could not be documented with photographs; there are only two previous records in Madagascar, in August 1990 and September 2008 (Safford & Hawkins 2013) (*GK*). Also between Maroansetra and Masoala, **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus*, **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* and **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* were recorded on 6–9 December (*MM*).

Three **Barn Swallows** *Hirundo rustica* were observed on the island of Nosy Ve, off the south-west coast, on 19 November, further emphasising that the species appears to be a regular visitor in the boreal winter to this part of Madagascar (*Bull. ABC* 18: 207–210) (*GK*).

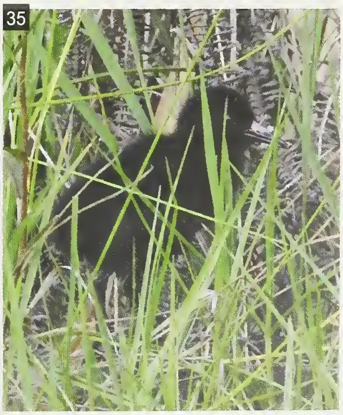

Figure 35. Downy young Madagascar Rail *Rallus madagascariensis*, Mananara Lodge, Madagascar, 29 November 2013 (William Price)

Poussin de Râle de Madagascar *Rallus madagascariensis*, Mananara Lodge, Madagascar, 29 novembre 2013 (William Price)

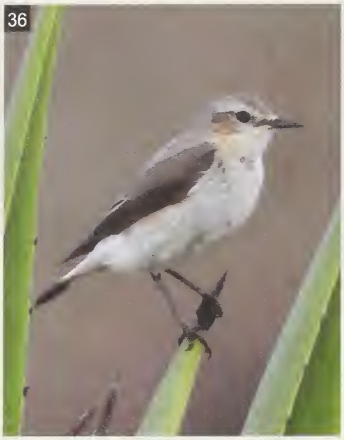

Figure 36. Northern Wheatear / Traquet motteux *Oenanthe oenanthe*, near Berenty, Madagascar, 16 July 2013 (David Erterius)

A **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* was photographed near Berenty, Madagascar, on 16 July 2013 (*DE*) (Fig. 36); the first documented record of this species for Madagascar was in December 2005, on the Anjiabe Plateau, in the north-west (*Bull. ABC* 16: 223). Two or three **House Crows** *Corvus splendens* were found in Tamatave on 2 January 2014 (*cf.* http://observado.org/waarneming/view/80921085); these are apparently the first for Madagascar (TL).

Madeira

The first **Wilson's Snipe** *Gallinago delicata* for Madeira was photographed at Machico on 19–21 October 2013 (*CC-F & HR, www.madeirabirds.com/wilson-snipe-gallinago-delicata-first-record-madeira*). Other noteworthy records in June–November 2013 include the following. The first **Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco* for Madeira was found dead in the pond at Casa Velha do Palhiero Hotel on 4 November, whilst the second **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* for the island, a male, was at Lugar de Baixo, Ponta do Sol, on 1–2 June. A **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* was seen off Calheta on 3 June and 5 July, and a **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* off Porto Moniz on 17 September. A **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* was at Lugar de Baixo in early June. A **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* was on Selvagem Grande on 11 October, a **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* at Machico on 21 October, with a **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* also there on 19 October, and a **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* at Lugar de Baixo on 23 October. Single **Semipalmated Sandpipers** *Calidris pusilla* were at Lugar de Baixo on 27 September and Ribeira Brava on 6 November; on the same date at the latter site there was also a **White-rumped Sandpiper** *C. fuscicollis*, whilst a **Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria* was at Machico on 13 September. On Pico do Areeiro, two **Isabelline Wheatears** *Oenanthe isabellina* were found on 6 November (per *Dutch Birding* 35: 251; *Birding World* 26: 278, 422–424, 499).

Malaŵi

A **Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan* was present along the Shire River at Mvuu Lodge, Liwonde, in August 2013 (www.wilderness-safaris.com/blog/posts/mvuu-camp-and-mvuu-lodge-august-2013); this is apparently the first for the country—it does not figure on the latest ABC checklist of the birds of Malaŵi (Dowsett *et al.* 2013).

Morocco

The following records are from the period April–December 2013. The most unusual report was of a **White-throated Bee-eater** *Merops albicollis* observed at Gleb Jdiane, Oued Ad-Deheb, Western Sahara, on 5–6 December (*NJ & HJ* per *go-south.org*); this is not only a first for Morocco but also for the Western Palearctic.

Seawatching at Cap Rhir, north of Agadir, on 8 July yielded, among others, three **White-faced Storm-petrels** *Pelagodroma marina*, 25,000 **Cory's Shearwaters** *Calonectris borealis*, five **Sooty Shearwaters** *Puffinus griseus*, a **Barolo** (Macaronesian) **Shearwater** *P. b. baroli* and a **Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii* (*JV & FW* per *moroccanbirds.blogspot.com*). Two **Great Shearwaters** *Puffinus gravis* were observed off Bouznika, Zaër, on 24 August (*AM & BM* per *go-south.org*). A **Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* was at Dar Bouazza, Casablanca area, in October–November (*BM*). In eastern Morocco, a **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus* was photographed near Midelt on 10 October (*BBa*). A few **Common Buttonquails** *Turnix sylvaticus* were singing between Oualidia and El Jadida, western Morocco, on 18–19 May; a new highway planned between these two towns may threaten the survival of the last known population of the nominate subspecies (per *Dutch Birding* 35: 255).

At Casablanca, a **Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* was at the Marabout de Sidi Abderrahmane on 17 December (*BM*). A **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* was seen in the Larache marshes on 25 August (*AM*). In Western Sahara, an **Upland Sandpiper** *Bartramia longicauda* was photographed near Dakhla, Oued Ad Deheb, on 11 October (per *Dutch Birding* 35: 391). Single **Ring-billed Gulls** *Larus delawarensis* were reported from Oued Ksob on 28 April (*RW*), Essaouira on 23 August (*BBa*) and Dar Bouazza on 16 November (*BM*). At Oukaïmeden, western High Atlas, a **White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* was noted on 15 July (*JV & FW*). Five **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* were encountered in the Figuig area on 3–6 November (*KL, BM, AM & SZ*) and a male **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* was observed at Essaouira on 23 October (*PG-S*).

Mozambique

Records from October–December 2013 include the following. A pelagic trip out of Maputo on 9 November produced a **Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*, a **White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus*, a **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* (apparently the first record for the country) and an **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*. At least two **Arctic Terns** were reported on a trip into Maputo Bay on 25 November, a particularly unusual species in this area. A **Lesser**

Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* was reported from Benguerra Island on 20 October.

A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was observed near Goba on 8 December. A remarkable find was a **Short-tailed Pipit** *Anthus brachyurus* near Maputo on 25 October. Some **Common Mynas** *Acridotheres tristis* were reported from Maputo on 7 October. The presence of **Red-throated Twinspots** *Hypargos niveoguttatus* in the University Botanical Gardens in Maputo on 22 October was surprising and the possibility of escapes cannot be ruled out. On 24 November, a male **Cuckoo Finch** *Anomalospiza imberbis* was also reported from Maputo—an excellent record for the country (per *TH*).

Namibia

Southern Africa's first **Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana* was photographed at NamibRand Nature Reserve, central Namibia, on 13 November 2013 (full details will be published in *Bull. ABC*).

Other records from the period July–December 2013 include the following. A **Wandering Albatross** *Diomedea exulans*, first seen from a fishing vessel just south of the Orange River, Northern Cape, South Africa, on 22 October, remained with the ship all day, eventually passing into Namibian waters. At least six **Leach's Storm-petrels** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* were reported *c*.50 nautical miles off Luderitz on 13 November. In late July, a **Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca* and a **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* were at the Walvis Bay Sewage Works. Single **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* were reported from Otjiseva farm, *c*.30 km north of Windhoek, on 27 October; *c*.40 km west of Windhoek on 29 November; and from Ngepi Camp, in the western Caprivi, on 13 December.

An **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* was located at Walvis Bay Salt Works on 29 July (possibly one of the individuals reported from this area earlier in the year), whilst a **Pacific Golden Plover** *P. fulva* stayed at Walvis Bay Lagoon from 30 October until at least 8 December. A **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* was found at Rundu Sewage Works on 16 December and a **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* near Katima Mulilo, in the eastern Caprivi, at the end of August. A **Common Redshank** *T. totanus* was in the Walvis Bay area in late July, with at least one other individual at Mile 4 Salt Works, north of Swakopmund, in mid December. At Walvis Bay Salt Works, at least two **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* were present in late July; their numbers increased to 35 at the end of October and to at least 50 in late November, with large numbers still there in December. A **Wilson's Phalarope** *Steganopus tricolor* was also seen in the area on 15–17 October, and a **Red Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* on 8 December. A **Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan* was observed in Swakopmund in mid August. **Gull-billed Terns** *Gelochelidon nilotica* were reported from Island View Lodge, Katima Mulilo, on 30 July, and the Andoni Plains, Etosha National Park, on 16 October (still present on 14 December).

A **Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* was, once again, present at Monte Christo farm, *c*.30 km north of Windhoek, on 24 November—this is the fifth successive season that this bird has returned to this site, well south of its normal range. Also well outside of its known range in the subregion was a **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* in a garden in Luderitz on 26 November. A **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* was photographed at Palmwag Lodge, in northern Namibia, on 5 December; this appears to be southern Africa's 18th record. A **Grey Penduline Tit** *Anthoscopus caroli* was observed *c*.2 km west of Ruacana on 17 October, apparently *c*.300 km west of where it normally occurs (per *TH*).

Niger

Due to ongoing security problems in the country only a few reports were received in the second half of 2013, including two **Hottentot Teal** *Anas hottentota* on 28 September and 27 October, as well as 1–2 **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus* on 24 September, all in the south; there are fewer than 20 records of these species (per *JB & UL*).

São Tomé & Príncipe

Excellent views of **Príncipe Thrush** *Turdus xanthorhynchus* were obtained in the moist forests in the south of Príncipe on 10 July 2013 (*NB*). This Critically Endangered species, recently split from São Tomé (or Gulf of Guinea) Thrush *T. olivaceofuscus*, was rediscovered in 1997 after an absence of records since the 1920s and it is estimated that fewer than 250 mature individuals remain. Two **Pied Kingfishers** *Ceryle rudis* were present in the estuary of the rio Papagaio, Príncipe, from 21

37

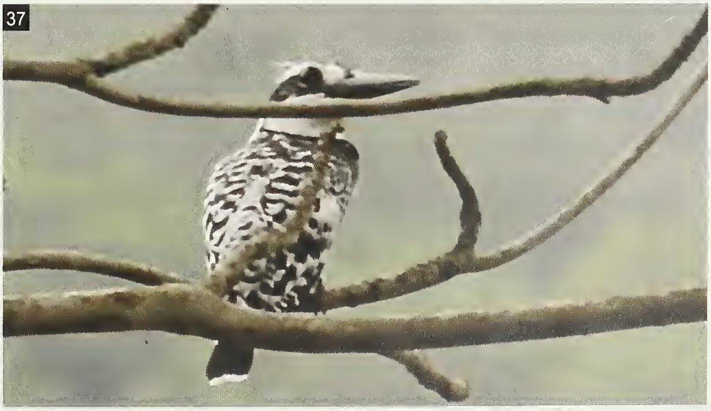

Figure 37. Pied Kingfisher / Martin-pêcheur pie *Ceryle rudis*, Rio Papagaio, Príncipe, 21 July 2013 (António Castelo)

38

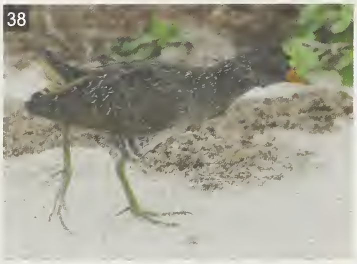

Figure 38. Spotted Crake / Marouette ponctuée *Porzana porzana*, Étoile, Seychelles, 26 November 2013 (Gérard Rocamora)

39

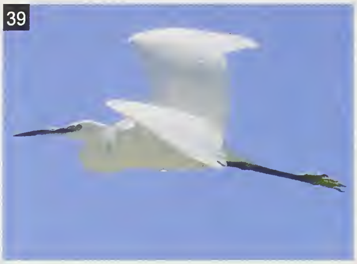

Figure 39. Little Egret / Aigrette garzette *Egretta garzetta*, St François, Seychelles, 12 December 2013 (Richard Jeanne)

40

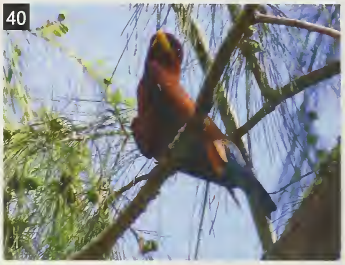

Figure 40. Broad-billed Roller / Rolle violet *Eurystomus glaucurus*, Alphonse, Seychelles, 13 December 2013 (Richard Jeanne)

July until at least early October (Fig. 37; *AC, RQ & JT* per *MMe*). In São Tomé and Príncipe, the species has been recorded only at this locality, in June 1997 (Jones & Tye 2006. *The Birds of São Tomé & Príncipe with Annobón. An Annotated Checklist*) and June 2008 (*Bull. ABC* 16: 107).

Senegal

Records from 2013 include the following. At least ten occupied nests of **Red-billed Tropicbirds** *Phaethon aethereus* were counted at the regular breeding site on the Îles de la Madeleine, off Dakar, on 17 February, most with adults still incubating and one with a single chick; one nest contained a dead adult (*BPi*); the site has apparently not been monitored in recent years. A female **Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* with six pulli was observed at Lac Tanma, north-west of Thies, on 3 November; although breeding was suspected, there appear to be no previous confirmed nesting records for Senegal (*BPi & PR*). A small group **Speckle-fronted Weavers** *Sporopipes frontalis* at Almadies, Dakar, in mid February was rather unusual at this location (*BPi*).

Seychelles

Reports received by Seychelles Bird Records Committee (SBRC) from the period June–December 2013 include late submissions of several remarkable sightings at sea on 9 February 2011: the first country record of **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* (two adults and one unaged bird halfway between Coëtivy and Agalega), at least 30 **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax* in the same area (11 previous records involving 17 birds in total) and the first sight record of **Herald Petrel** *Pterodroma arminjoniana*, south of Coëtivy (30 geolocator records from Seychelles waters have also been accepted recently by SBRC). A **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris* (=*Limicola*) *falcinellus* on Mahé on 10–12 February 2011 has been accepted as a sixth Seychelles record (chronologically the fifth).

A **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* on Étoile on 26 November was the second country record (Fig. 38), whilst a **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* on Cousine Island on 2–30 November was the third. An **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* on Bird on 8 July and a **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* off Mahé on 21 October were both fifth records for Seychelles.

There were two unusual reports of resident species. A **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* on African Banks on 28 November was the first report from the coralline islands west of the granitic islands, where it is resident. A **Madagascar Coucal** *Centropus toulou* on Assumption from 29 January until 12 November at least was the first record from the island for more than a century—it was wiped out following the commencement of guano mining in the early 20th century, but is still resident on Aldabra. On 14 November, the first ornithological visit to Grand Île, Cosmoledo, since the eradication of rats from the island in 2008 located seven active nests of **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra*, the first breeding attempt there since 1968. **Brown Booby** *S. leucogaster* was found breeding on Boudeuse on 25 November, the first reported breeding record from the island since 1958 and the first reported recolonisation of any island in Seychelles by this species.

There were several sightings of landbirds on Aldabra in August, which is very unusual for the time of year. These included the second record of **Madagascar Bee-eater** *Merops superciliosus* (four on 9 August, with at least one remaining until 15 September), a fourth record of **Common Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* on 1–2 August and a **Mascarene Martin** *Phedina borbonica* on 21–28 August (11 previous records).

A remarkable 15–20 **Eleonora's Falcons** *Falco eleonorae* on Aldabra on 12 April was a record number (all but one of 36 previous accepted records have been of lone birds). Singles were also on Aldabra on 4 November and Denis on 11 December. There were four reports of **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*: on Curieuse between 23 January and 23 May, Mahé on 7 June and 9 December, and St François on 12 December (Fig. 39). **Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum* was reported twice: on Bird on 22 April and on Assumption on 11 October. Also of interest were a **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* on Alphonse on 10 October (nine previous records), a **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* on Alphonse on 18–20 November (six records), a **Yellow-billed**

Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* on Assumption on 4–6 August (seven records), two **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* on Aldabra on 21 October, a **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* on Alphonse on 4 December (eight records), a **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* on Île Persévérance on 4 May (seven records), a **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* on Assumption on 24 June–4 July, a **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus* on 11 December on Alphonse, a **Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* on Alphonse on 13 December ((Fig. 40), a **Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* on Aldabra on 4 November (six records), a **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* on Remire on 27 November, a **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* on Aldabra on 25 October, and a **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* on Aride on 12 December.

During the period, SBRC reviewed the only country record of **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferrugina* based on newly received and conflicting evidence. This record has now been rejected and the species removed from the Seychelles list (per *AS*).

Sierra Leone

A female **Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* was observed at Guma Dam, Western Area Peninsula Forest Reserve, near Freetown, on 14 March 2013; there are few records in the country (*BdB*).

South Africa

The following records are from the period July–December 2013. Noteworthy species seen in the waters south and west of Cape Point include the Critically Endangered **Amsterdam Albatross** *Diomedea* (*exulans*) *amsterdamensis* (photographed *c.*6 nautical miles south-west of Cape Point on 13 July), **Wandering Albatross** *D. exulans* (one in July; three in August; at least ten in September; six in October; one in November), **Southern Royal Albatross** *D. epomophora* (one in July; three in August; at least eight in September; three in October), **Northern Royal Albatross** *D.* (*e.*) *sanfordi* (one in July; three in August; at least seven in September; four in October; one in November), **Salvin's Albatross** *Thalassarche* (*cauta*) *salvini* (one on 18 August; one in October), **Spectacled Petrel** *Procellaria conspicillata* (one in October), **Slender-billed Prion** *Pachyptila belcheri* (one on 20 July), **White-bellied Storm-petrel** *Fregetta grallaria* (one in October), **Leach's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (one on 21 July) and **Red Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* (two on 29 September; at least 20 in October; one in November).

In Northern Cape, a **Wandering Albatross** was seen just south of the Orange River from a fishing vessel on 22 October. A **Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus* was observed in the waters south of Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, on 13 July. Pelagic trips out of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, produced **Wandering Albatross** (one on 22 November; the first for the province in *c.*10 years), **Northern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes halli* (one on 5 October; first record for the province), **Barau's Petrel** *Pterodroma baraui* (one on 5 October; nine on 22–24 November) and **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* (at least two on 22–24 November). **Sooty** *Phoebetria fusca* and **Light-mantled Albatrosses** *P. palpebrata* were satellite-tracked into the waters of Western and Eastern Cape in August.

Species observed from a fishing vessel in August–September in the waters 160 nautical miles south of Cape Agulhas, 60 nautical miles south of Port Elizabeth and 100 nautical miles south-east of Durban included **Wandering Albatross** (>100), **Southern Royal Albatross** (35), **Northern Royal Albatross** (40), **Tristan Albatross** *Diomedea* (*exulans*) *dabbenena* (5–6), **Sooty Albatross** (three), **Blue Petrel** *Halobaena caerulea* (four), **Atlantic Petrel** *Pterodroma incerta* (one), **Spectacled Petrel** (two) and **South Polar Skua** *Stercorarius maccormicki* (one).

A **Southern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes giganteus* in the tern roost at the St Lucia estuary, KwaZulu-Natal, on 12 October was an interesting find. In Eastern Cape, a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus* was again present on Bird Island in Algoa Bay on 15 August; almost certainly the same individual was seen there on 3 December. An **Australian Gannet** *Morus serrator* was also on the island from 11 November until at least early December. Another **Australian Gannet** was on Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay, Western Cape, on 19 October. A **frigatebird**, probably Greater Frigatebird *Fregata minor*, soaring over Hartbeespoort Dam, Gauteng, on 7 December, was a surprising record.

A **Green-backed Heron** *Butorides striata* was reported east of Graaff-Reinett, Eastern Cape, on 19 August. In Western Cape, a **Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca*, which is very rare in the province, was at Thesen Island, Knysna, on 3–8 December, whilst a **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* remained at Rondevlei Nature Reserve throughout the period. An **Abdim's Stork** *Ciconia abdimii* was located between Cannon Rocks and Woody Cape, Eastern Cape, on 27 July.

In October–December, reports involving at least 30 **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* were received from Limpopo, North West Province, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. In KwaZulu-Natal, an adult **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* soared over the Ixopo–Highflats road on 6 December, whilst at least six **Hooded Vultures** *Necrosyrtes monachus* were at Zimanga Private Game Reserve, north of Mkuze, on 7 July. A **Rüppell's Vulture** *Gyps rueppelli* was repeatedly photographed by camera traps at Blouberg Nature Reserve, Limpopo, during the period. A rather out-of-range juvenile **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* was observed at the Giant's Castle vulture hide, KwaZulu-Natal, on 17 November. **Ayres's Eagles** *Hieraaetus ayresii* were seen in KwaZulu-Natal at Durban on 9 October, Hluhluwe Game Reserve on 18 November and near Reitvlei on 23 November, with one at Groenkloof Nature Reserve, Gauteng, on 29 October. In Western Cape, a **Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* was observed at Plettenberg Bay on 2 November and near George Airport on 9 November. A **Corncrake** *Crex crex* was in the wetlands south of Pienaars River in Buffesdrift, Gauteng, on 5 November, and a **Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* at Ghio Pans, Eastern Cape, on 21 November. A surprising record for Northern Cape was an adult and a juvenile **Lesser Moorhen** *Gallinula angulata* in Augrabies Falls National Park (=NP) on 9 December, well south and west of the species' usual range. On 5 September, a **White-winged Flufftail** *Sarothrura ayresi* was located at King Shaka International Airport, KwaZulu-Natal. In Mpumalanga, a **Wattled Crane** *Grus carunculatus* was still present near Devon in July. A remarkable record concerned 14 **Blue Cranes** *G. paradisea* at Sandpan in Benoni, Gauteng, on 29–30 November.

A **Snowy** (Greater) **Sheathbill** *Chionis albus* at Mazeppa Bay, Eastern Cape, on 20 June, was still present on 2 July. Single **Lesser Jacanas** *Microparra capensis* were reported near Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, in early July, and near Komatipoort, Mpumalanga, on 9 December. In KwaZulu-Natal, an immature **Crab Plover** *Dromas ardeola* was at Umlalazi River mouth, Mtunzini, on 17–20 November; probably the same individual was at Umfolozi River mouth on 23 November and at the St Lucia estuary from 30 November until at least 6 December. In Eastern Cape, **Crab Plovers** were reported from Kei River mouth in November and at the Gamtoos estuary in December. A **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* was at Langebaan Lagoon, Western Cape, on 4 August. A **Bronze-winged Courser** *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* was found at Hauser Park, Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, on 13 December. **Chestnut-banded Plovers** *Charadrius pallidus* were observed at Mkhombo Dam (two) and Leeupan near Leandra (two), both in Mpumalanga, on 15 September, and at Barberspan Nature Reserve, North West Province, on 5 October, whilst **Caspian Plovers** *C. asiaticus* were at Mooiplaas waterhole, northern Kruger NP, Limpopo, in mid October (five) and at Gariep Dam, Free State, on 23 October (two). In Western Cape, a **Lesser Sand Plover** *C. mongolus* was at Seeberg on 26 November, and up to three **Greater Sand Plovers** *C. leschenaultii* at De Mond Nature Reserve on 2 November–4 December.

Single **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos* were recorded at Fish River mouth, Eastern Cape, in late September; at Cannon Rocks, Eastern Cape, on 12 October; in Phinda Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal, on 17 October; and at Barberspan Nature Reserve, North West Province, on 28 November. Up to two **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* were at West Coast NP, Western Cape, from late October until December. In October–December, at least 12 **Green Sandpipers** *T. ochropus* were reported from Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. A **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* was at Borakalalo Nature Reserve, North West Province, on 13–16 December, and two **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* were at Strandfontein Sewage Works, Western Cape, on 9–19 November.

A **Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan* was reported from Dyer Island in Gansbaai on 17 July and from Strandfontein Sewage Works, Western Cape, on 13–21 October. In Eastern Cape, at least one **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* was still present at Orient Beach, East London, on 7 July; an immature was at Mazeppa Bay on 19 November. In KwaZulu-Natal, a **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* was seen in Kosi Bay on 24 October. In the same province, a **Sooty Tern** *Onichoprion fuscatus* was again present at St Lucia from August until at least early December. In Eastern Cape, a **Sooty Tern** was present on Bird Island in Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth, at the end of September and on 23 October; one was found dead at Mazeppa Bay on 19 November. An out-of-range **Damara Tern** *Sternula balaenarum* was at the St. Lucia estuary, KwaZulu-Natal, on 27 September–12 October, whilst a **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* was noted at De Mond Nature Reserve, Western Cape, on 8 December. In Limpopo Province, an **African Skimmer** *Rynchops flavirostris* was reported from the Samaria Pans, near Mapungubwe NP, on 7 October.

In Gauteng, a male **Namaqua Sandgrouse** *Pterocles namaqua* was seen in Rietvlei Nature Reserve on 18 September—the first record for the greater Pretoria area. A **Levaillant's Cuckoo** *Clamator levaillantii* at Mavela Game Lodge, KwaZulu-Natal, on 6 October was an interesting find. A surprising record concerned an immature **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* in West Coast NP, Western Cape, on 16 November. Another immature was observed at Jeffrey's Bay, Eastern Cape, on 17 November, following a record near Queenstown the week before. Southern Africa's ninth **Madagascar Cuckoo** *C. rochii* remained near Biyamithi, Kruger NP, Mpumalanga, on 22 November–1 December. In Western Cape, a group of 12–20 **White-fronted Bee-eaters** *Merops bullockoides* bred at Matjiesvlei near Calitzdorp in July–August; some were still there in early December. A **Common Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* was present at the same farm. A small group of **White-fronted Bee-eaters** was also reported near Jansenville, Eastern Cape, on 17 November. A **Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus* was at Wilderness, Western Cape, on 11 July; this species appears to be expanding its range westwards.

A small group of **Melodious Larks** *Mirafra cheniana* was discovered in the Moletsi area, 20 km north-west of Polokwane, Limpopo, on 3 July; this is apparently only the second confirmed record for the province. Well out of the species' respective ranges were a **Stark's Lark** *Spizocorys starki* in Mountain Zebra NP, Eastern Cape, on 15 June, and a **Black Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne holomelas* at Roodekoppies Dam, north of Brits, North West Province, on 17 August. An irruption of **Grey-backed Sparrow Larks** *Eremopterix verticalis* occurred in Kruger NP in July–November. In Mpumalanga, two **Grey Wagtails** *Motacilla cinerea* were observed at the Blue Swallow Natural Heritage Site in Kaapschehoop on 14 December. A small population of **Short-tailed Pipits** *Anthus brachyurus* was found in Mabusa Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga, in December. Southern Africa's 15th **Golden Pipit** *Tmetothylacus tenellus* was discovered in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 8 November. In Gauteng, a **White-breasted Cuckooshrike** *Coracina pectoralis* was reported from Groenkloof Nature Reserve, Pretoria, on 7 July and was seen again between mid October and early November. Also there during the same period was a **Mountain Wagtail** *Motacilla clara*.

The first **Bush Blackcap** *Lioptilus nigricapillus* for Western Cape stayed at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, Betty's Bay, on 7–11 September; the westernmost limits of the species' distribution lie *c*.720 km to the east. Other out-of-range **Bush Blackcaps** were reported at St. Lucia, KwaZulu-Natal, on 30 September–24 October (one), and at Randburg, Gauteng, on 7 October–3 November (two). A **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* near Percy Fyfe Nature Reserve, Limpopo, on 14 December, appears to be the 19th for southern Africa. A **Red-capped Robin Chat** *Cossypha natalensis* was still present in Sedgefield, Western Cape, in August, with another at Sasolburg, Free State, on 3 October. A **Collared Palm Thrush** *Cichladusa arquata* at Hoedspruit, Limpopo, on 25 August–2 September, may represent the southernmost record. An **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* was at Augrabies Falls NP, Northern Cape, on 12 December—possibly South Africa's westernmost record. A **Spotted Creeper** *Salpornis spilonotus* was at Mabula Game Reserve, Limpopo, in September; this is the first photographically confirmed record in South Africa. In Eastern Cape, a pair of **Violet-backed Starlings** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* was reported near Queenstown, with another individual outside of East London, on 7–8 December. In Northern Cape, a **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* was seen on an African Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve on 30 July. The influx of **Lark-like Buntings** *Emberiza impetuani*, which commenced earlier in the year (*cf. Bull. ABC* 20: 230) continued throughout July–November, with significant numbers being reported from Kruger NP and Limpopo (per *TH*; *sa-rarebirdnews@googlegroups.com*).

Sudan

Records from 2013–January 2014 include the following. **Hottentot Teals** *Anas hottentota* were observed regularly throughout 2013 at the sewage pools at Bahri, just north of Khartoum, and Soba Hospital, with up to 15 birds present at both sites; Nikolaus (1987. *Distribution Atlas of Sudan's Birds*) mentioned just two records in Sudan, but suspected the species may have been overlooked (*MT, TJ, SB*). Two female **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* were photographed at Khartoum Sewage Pools on 16 December; the species is rarely recorded in Sudan (*TJ*). A male **Southern Pochard** *Netta erythrophthalma* was photographed at Bahri Sewage Pools and up to eight males and a single female were present at Khartoum Sewage Pools on 30 November and 2 December (Fig. 41); the species is rarely reported so far north and there are only a handful of previous records from the country. With only one record mentioned by Nikolaus (1987), **Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* might be considered a very rare bird in Sudan, but sightings throughout 2013 from the sewage pools at Bahri, Khartoum and Soba Hospital suggest that it is a fairly common resident in appropriate habitat. This also suggests that the population in Egypt is not as disjunct from other African populations as previously thought (*MT, TJ*). Up to 44 **Red-knobbed Coots** *Fulica cristata* were at Khartoum Sewage Pools from 30 November until late January at least, including a pair with two young, photographed on 24 January (Fig. 42); these are the first records for Sudan (*MT, TJ, SB*). A

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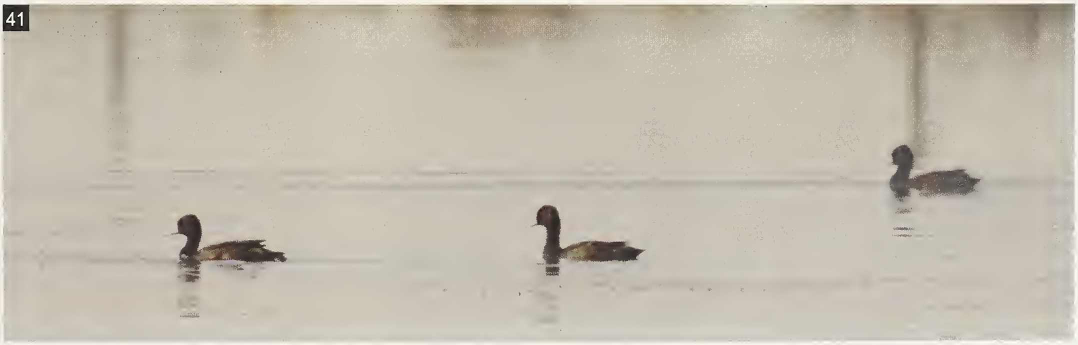

Figure 41. Southern Pochards / Nettes brunes *Netta erythrophthalma*, Khartoum Sewage Pools, Sudan, 30 November 2013 (Tom Jenner)

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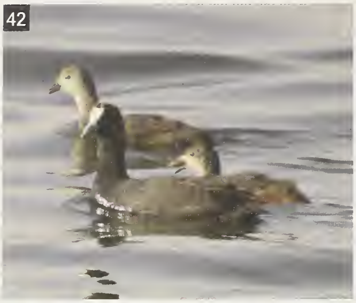

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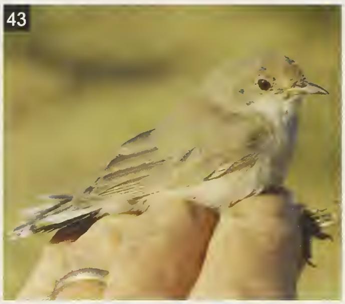

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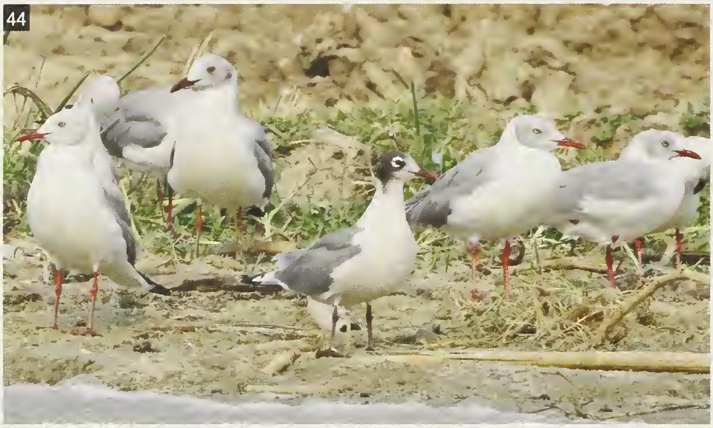


Figure 42. Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* with young, Khartoum Sewage Pools, Sudan, 24 January 2013 (Tom Jenner)

Foulque à crête *Fulica cristata* avec jeunes, Khartoum Sewage Pools, Soudan, 24 janvier 2013 (Tom Jenner)

Figure 43. Female Ménétries's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*, Sennar, Sudan, 2 November 2013 (Tom Jenner)

Fauvette de Ménétries *Sylvia mystacea* femelle, Sennar, Soudan, 2 novembre 2013 (Tom Jenner)

Figure 44. Franklin's Gull / Mouette de Franklin *Leucophaeus pipixcan*, Kazinga Channel, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda, 24 July 2013 (Jan Arras)

female **Ménétries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea* mist-netted near Sennar, *c.*300 km south-east of Khartoum, on 2 November (Fig. 43), was a rare record so far south (*TJ*).

Uganda

The most remarkable record in 2013 was of a **Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan*, photographed in the Kazinga Channel, Queen Elizabeth National Park, on 24 July (Fig. 44; *JA*); this is a major rarity in East Africa and there is just one previous record for Uganda, of an adult discovered in Murchison Falls National Park on 8 June 2011 (*Bull. ABC* 19: 108). Three **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* were observed at close range in the grounds of Makerere University on 16 September after heavy overnight rain (*RS & DP*); the species is considered to be an uncommon passage migrant, but there are few reliable records in the country. An early male **Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio* was at Lira on 20 September; according to Carswell *et al.* (2005. *The Bird Atlas of Uganda*) autumn passage usually commences in October (*RS*). A male **Hartlaub's Marsh Widowbird** *Euplectes hartlaubi* was observed near Kajjansi, south of Kampala, on 22 September; apparently the bird had been present for some time (*BPi & DM*).

Zimbabwe

Records from July–December 2013 include the following. Twenty **African Darters** *Anhinga rufa* at Chipinda Pools, Runde River, on 11–15 July, was a good count; they have been netted out of the main Harare Dams (Lakes Chivero and Manyame) where they bred in their hundreds *c.*15 years ago. At Greengrove Nature Reserve, Harare, 760 breeding **Sacred Ibises** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*, representing at least 1% of the Zimbabwean population, were counted on 26 July; on 30 August many chicks of variable age were present, with two being eaten by two **Purple Swamphens** *Porphyrio porphyrio* (*DR-G*). An **African Marsh Harrier** *Circus ranivorus* was observed at Rainham Dam, Harare, on 13 July (*DW*), whilst a **Western Marsh Harrier** *C. aeruginosus* was reported from Lake Manyane on 13 December (per *TH*). Two **Wattled Cranes** *Grus carunculatus* were seen at Chikokerano Pan on 10 July (*IM*); according to local people, the pair returns to this pan every year. A **Grey Crowned Crane** *Balearica regulorum* was at Crowborough Farm, near Harare, in July (*IM*), whilst at Dreifontein, the country's crane heartland, none was recorded. **African Finfoots** *Podica senegalensis* were found at Chipinda Pools and Chishakwe Dam, in the Save / Runde area of the south-east lowveld, in July; this species seldom frequents dams (*TA & DR-G*). The presence of **Speckled Mousebirds** *Colius striatus* at Chipinda Pools, Runde River, Gona re Zhou National Park, on 11–15 July, was rather unexpected; the species seems to have replaced Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* in Harare. The first **European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* for the season was noted on 22 September, in Harare (*DR-G*). A male **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* was reported near Mahuwe in the lower Zambezi Valley on 26 November. In Gosho Park, near Marondera, a **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* was seen on 21 November and a **Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* on 12 December (per

TH). A **Spotted Creeper** *Salpornis spilonotus* was photographed on its nest in Mukuvisi Woodlands on 1 September (*CvC*) and a **Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala* feeding a **Village Indigobird** *Vidua chalybeata* was photographed at Lake Chivero, on 1 July (*AW*; see *facebook.com/birdlifezimbabwe*). An **Orange-breasted Waxbill** *Amandava subflava* in Gona re Zhou National Park on 5 July represents a range extension (*BB & DB*).

Records were collated by Ron Demey from contributions supplied by Tony Alegria (TA), Jan Arras (JA), Peter D'Arcy (PDA), Brahim Bakkass (BBa), Rubén Barone (RB), Nigel Birch (NBi), Gavin Blair (GB), Stephen Blight (SB), Mark van Boekel (MvB), Bruce & Doreen Bolnick (BB & DB), Nik Borrow / Birdquest (NB), Chris Brewster (CB), Joost Brouwer (JB), Bernd de Bruijn (BdB), António Castelo (AC), Celesta von Chamier (CvC), Geoffroy Citegetse (GC), Jacob C. Cooper (JC), C. Correia-Fagundes (CC-F), James Henry Cross (JCr), David Erterius / Rockjumper Birding Tours (DE), Eddy Everaerdt (EE), Lincoln Fishpool (LF), Roger Fotso (RF), Yves Gaugris (YG), Kai Gedeon (KG), Mike Goldsworthy (MG), Lee Gregory (LG), Peter Greig-Smith (PG-S), Trokon Grimes (TG), Pete Hancock (PH), Trevor Hardaker (TH), David Hoddinott / Rockjumper Birding Tours (DH), Jérôme Mokoko Ikonga (JMI), Colin Jackson (CJ), Noëlle & Hervé Jacob (NJ & HJ), Tom Jenner (TJ), Aidan Kelly (AK), Guy M. Kirwan (GK), Karim Laidi (KL), Marc Languy (ML), Ulf Liedén (UL), Theo Linders (TL), Emmanuel M. Loqueh (EL), Innocent Magunje (IM), Benoît Maire (BM), Arsène Manirambona (AMa), Alain Mathurin (AM), Martim Melo (MMe), Johannes & Sharon Merz (JM & SM), Michael Mills / Birding Africa (MM), Flomo Molubah (FM), Deogratius Muhumuza (DM), Ben Phalan (BP), Bram Piot (BPi), Derek Pomeroy (DP), Rita Quitério (RQ), Paul Robinson (PR), David Rockingham-Gill (DR-G), H. Romano (HR), Lionel Sineux (LS), Roger Skeen (RS), Adrian Skerrett (AS), Walter Smith (WS), Marwa Taha (MT), João Teles de Vasconcelos (JT), Chris Townend (CT), Steph Tyler (ST), Jorrit Vlot (JV), Nigel Voaden (NV), Ann Warner (AW), Ian White (IW), Richard White (RW), Debbie Wiggins (DW), Frank Wildschut (FW), Sabine Zégres (SZ), and from Birding World, Dutch Birding, *sa-rarebirdnews@googlegroups.com, www.azoresbs.weebly.com, www.go-south.org, observation.org and www.wilderness-safaris.com.*

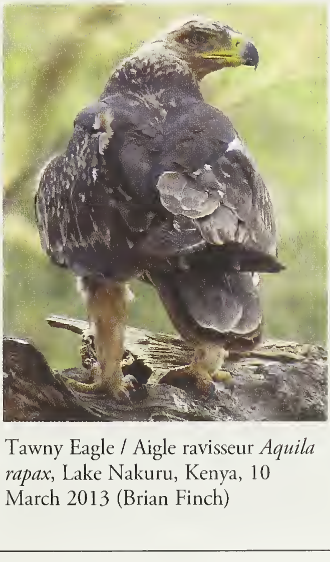
Contributions for Recent Reports can be sent to Ron Demey, Walter Thijsstraat 9, B-3500 Hasselt, Belgium and (preferably) by e-mail: rondemey1@gmail.com or recent_reports@africanbirdclub.org

Corrigendum Recent Reports *Bull. ABC* 20(2)

Dick Forsman commented as follows on the eagle photograph taken by Brian Finch in Kenya and published in the last issue of Recent Reports as Fig. 27 (reproduced below):

"It is claimed to be an Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*, but in my opinion it is a Tawny Eagle *A. rapax*. Although the overall impression is very similar to an adult Eastern Imperial Eagle, the combination of features excludes the possibility of it being one.

First, if an Eastern Imperial Eagle had a mantle this dark and uniform, it would be a full adult, as all younger age classes are very mottled, including above. However, the head and tail are wrong for an adult Eastern Imperial Eagle. Indeed, the head of an adult Eastern Imperial Eagle is far more contrasting, with a uniformly pale yellow nape and neck reaching down to the mantle, whilst the throat and cheeks are contrastingly black. These features are already visible in the mottled immature plumages 2–3 years before the final adult plumage is attained. The tail of the bird in the photograph looks rather uniformly dark grey, whereas an older immature or adult Eastern Imperial Eagle would have a barred, pale grey tail with a broad black subterminal band. Younger Eastern Imperial Eagles do exhibit a tail like the bird in the photo, but then the rest of the plumage is very mottled and pale.


Tawny Eagle / Aigle ravisseur *Aquila rapax*, Lake Nakuru, Kenya, 10 March 2013 (Brian Finch)

Second, the wings, which were the first to catch my attention. Among the larger *Aquila* eagles, only Tawny Eagles have pale-spotted / -streaked upperwing-coverts within an otherwise dark plumage, a feature which often causes confusion with the spotted eagles *Clanga clanga / C. pomarina*. Not all dark Tawnies show this type of markings, but if streaking is present, both Steppe *A. nipalensis* and Eastern Imperial Eagle can be ruled out by this feature alone. An adult Eastern Imperial Eagle, with a dark mantle as here, would have dark upperwing-coverts, possibly admixed with some browner and worn feathers, but they would be still uniform, not distinctly marked.

And last but not least, this bird does not have white braces to the scapulars / mantle; although some adult Eastern Imperial Eagles may lack them, most adults would show at least a few scattered white feathers. These eagles can be tricky!"

Reviews

Several books reviewed in the *Bulletin*, and many others, including the major African field guides and avifaunas, can be purchased via the African Bird Club website from WildSounds. The Club receives a donation for its Conservation Fund for every item purchased via the Books and Media Sales page. Click the 'Buy Now' button by the relevant book to check the latest price, purchase the item and help us to protect Africa's birds.

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Plusieurs livres analysés dans le *Bulletin*, et beaucoup d'autres, parmi lesquels les guides et avifaunes les plus importants, peuvent être achetés via le site web de l'African Bird Club auprès de WildSounds. Pour chaque article acheté via la page « Book and Media Sales », le Club reçoit une donation pour son Fonds pour la Conservation. Cliquez sur l'onglet 'Buy Now' à côté de l'article recherché afin de vérifier le dernier prix, et aidez-nous à protéger les oiseaux africains en l'achetant.

The Birds of Africa Vol. 8: The Malagasy Region

Roger Safford and Frank Hawkins. London, UK: Christopher Helm. 1,024 pp, 63 colour plates including one of extinct birds and 15 of vagrants, maps of vegetation, national parks and protected areas, species distribution maps, tables and line drawings. ISBN (hardback, print) 978-0-7136-6532-1, (e-book) 978-1-4081-9049-4. UK£150.

This final volume in the eight-volume *Birds of Africa* (*BoA*) series is a magnificent multi-authored work, scholarly, comprehensive and edited to a uniform standard of easy-on-the-eye, excellently presented texts. But before its praises are sung in detail, permit a historical digression.

In the earlier, biennial, week-long *BoA* meetings at Academic Press, London, during a period when the original concept of a three-volume work gradually extended to seven volumes, the desirability of an eighth book on the avifauna of Madagascar and its associated islands was repeatedly discussed. Publication of the seven volumes (Brown *et al.* 1982, Fry *et al.* 1988, 2000, Fry & Keith 2004, Keith *et al.* 1992, Urban *et al.* 1986, 1997) was protracted over 22 years, and at the time when it was becoming increasingly apparent that 'Madagascar' was quite beyond the capabilities of the *BoA* team as then constituted, the names and Malagasy researches of Roger Safford and Frank Hawkins were becoming increasingly well known. That was in the early 1990s. Safford and Hawkins were encouraged by Andy Richford of Academic Press to embark on what ultimately became a colossal enterprise, and soon 'Africa' and 'Madagascar' were proceeding along slightly different paths. *BoA* was traded to Christopher Helm in 2002; two years later *BoA* 7 (which its authors had by then come to think of as the final volume of the series: Fry *et al.* 2004) was published under Nigel Redman's capable direction.

At first sight *BoA* 8 is in the same companion format as vols. 1–7, the jacket with bird portraits against the familiar risen sun, the same fonts, spine and frontispiece logo. But the main text layout differs substantially from that of the rest of the series, as befits an avifauna that is so distinctively different from mainland Africa's. Page height is 5 mm less than in *BoA* 1–7; the two columns of text per page have greater line width and spacing, and the distribution maps are presented differently (necessarily so, on account of the Malagasy region's numerous far-flung islands and archipelagos). Endpapers are the shocking pink of the breasts of the mainland's Carmine Bee-eaters *Merops nubicus*—much lovelier on the bird than in the book!

It is no wonder that this tome has had such a long incubation period. It has evolved over a period of exponentially increasing interest in, and consequent knowledge of, the Malagasy region by visiting and home-grown birders, photographers, ornithologists and other specialists. Because of the unusually high degree of endemism and massive habitat destruction, the region is recognised as one of the world's critical biodiversity hotspots, and it has amongst the highest conservation priorities globally.

Long and informative as the introductory sections are, a review of this remarkable region's ornithological exploration is unfortunately missing. However, the geological history, geography, climate and vegetation are mapped and discussed at length, island by island: Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, Mascarenes, and the many 'outer islands', rich in seabirds, in the Mozambique channel and east of Madagascar. We learn that the Seychelles micro-continent rifted from India *c.*64 million years ago (MYA) and that other islands are of volcanic or coralline origin. Separation of Seychelles and Madagascar from Africa started *c.*160 MYA; the distance between Madagascar and Africa was reduced by falling sea levels 45–26 MYA. Avian biogeography and evolution are addressed at length, with plenty of tabulation. Of 254 resident Malagasy species (other than seabirds), the geographical origin of half can be safely inferred: 84 are from mainland Africa and 33 from Asia. The three vasa parrots *Coracopsis* are of Australasian origin and the three blue pigeons *Alectroenas* may be too. Of the two Malagasy families that have undergone classic radiation, the 21 species in 15 heterogeneous genera of the endemic vangas (Vangidae) are of either Asian or African provenance, and the 11 species in eight genera of the endemic tetrakas and similar 'warblers' (Bernieridae) originated in mainland Africa. Madagascar itself is endemic-rich but species-poor, the poverty discussed but ill-understood. Other endemic Malagasy families are mesites (Mesitornithidae), the beautiful ground rollers (Brachypteraciidae), Cuckoo-roller (Leptosomidae) and asities (Philepittidae), plus the extinct elephant birds (Aepyornithidae).

What wonderful birds! What a magnificent book about them! Roger Safford and Frank Hawkins are the principal authors, editors and compilers of a compendium 'based on the consolidated efforts and knowledge of field workers, scientists, birders and other observers', no fewer than 58 of whom are co-authors. They have been given full reign to write species accounts at whatever length is needed to provide exhaustive details under the headings of Distribution (accompanied by large bicoloured range maps for the 382 regularly occurring species), Description (of every subspecies, with weights and measurements), General Habits, Food, Breeding Habits (as studied in the region, with some information from mainland Africa for shared birds), and an informative and up-to-date final section on Status and Conservation. The last four sections are particularly heavily referenced.

The admirable colour plates, by John Gale and Brian Small, encompass 47 near the front of the book of regular occurring birds, with a 48th of extinct species, and a group of 15, of vagrants, near the end. All major plumages and distinctive subspecies of regular species are portrayed. Style is similar to the plates in *Birds of the Western Palearctic* and of another acclaimed work, the *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, with birds in profile, unidirectional, most images numbered, identified in a legend at the foot of the plate. It sometimes takes a moment to work out which is what—for instance, the eight images (seven numbered) of Yellow-bellied *Neodrepanis hypoxantha* and Common Sunbird-asities *N. coruscans* in Plate 34. I have found it helpful to enclose the various images of each species in pencil boundaries. It is good but sad to see the portraits of extinct birds in Plate 48, including four parrots, two starlings, two rails, two pigeons (the Dodo *Raphus cucullatus* of Mauritius and Solitaire *Pezophaps solitaria* of Rodrigues) and a huge elephant bird, one of 7–8 species of *Mullerornis* and giant *Aepyornis*, all of Madagascar.

The reviewer is not conversant with Malagasy birds (apart from a 1976 visit to Seychelles and Jeff Watson's Seychelles Kestrel *Falco araeus* project), and if there are any factual errors or questionable assertions in the book, he has failed to spot them. The work exudes authority in every sentence and is apparently quite free of the shortcomings of earlier *BoA*s (Fishpool 2001, Leonard & Demey 2006). To give a taste of species texts: in a five-page account the endemic White-throated Rail *Dryolimnas cuvieri* is 'believed to be close to *Lewinia* of Australasia', has a race throughout Madagascar lowland and up to 2,450 m and another on Aldabra which is flightless; sings in duet and also has a 'solo song...of increasing loudness and complexity, continuing for up to 4 min'; forages '...while wading, turning stones and probing...sometimes submerging head', kills crabs 'with powerful blows from bill', shakes geckos and skinks in its bill and beats them against the substrate, and 'reportedly gleans ectoparasites from Aldabra Giant Tortoises [*Aldabrachelys gigantea*]'; does not have helpers-at-the-nest as formerly thought; has 12 'formal behavioural postures and displays' which are described and illustrated with line drawings; and the Aldabra race is of much interest 'as the last surviving flightless bird in the Malagasy region (many such species occurred on at least Mascarenes and Madagascar but are now extinct...overall density of 1.5 birds/ha in open scrub and 3 birds/ha in dense scrub' with a total Aldabra population after birds reintroduced to Picard have 'reached equilibrium, expected to be c. 13,500'.

Finally, there are 92 pages of References to original scientific descriptions, Bibliography and Indexes. The bibliography cites no fewer than 1,340 references.

What a monumental work. What a magnificent achievement, the authors, collaborators and publishers are to be warmly congratulated.

C. H. Fry

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Oiseaux du Katanga / Birds of Katanga

Michel Louette & Michel Hasson, 2011. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa. 404 pp, 400 colour photographs, four maps. Hardback. ISBN 978-9-0817-9400-8 (French edition); 978-9-0817-9401-5 (English edition). €65.00 (RMCA) / UK£ 65.00 (NHBS)

Lying in the heart of the continent, the Democratic Republic of Congo, or Congo-Kinshasa, Africa's largest country, has a rich avifauna comprising some 1,100 species. Of these, 693 have been recorded in south-easternmost Katanga province, among them some local forms of 'masked' weavers, variously treated as distinct species or subspecies. Although many contributions on its avifauna have been published, mostly during the 20th century, a handbook or atlas that synthesises and updates the ornithology of this diverse area is still lacking. Having resided in the country many years ago (RD) and in Katanga for the last four years (NV), we thus eagerly anticipated the publication of this work. Does it live up to our expectations?

It is a large (21 × 30 cm) hardback lavishly illustrated with colour photographs but with comparatively limited text. At first sight, it therefore looks more like a coffee-table book. The introductory part of 30 pages includes brief notes on geography, climate, vegetation types, ecology and biogeography, illustrated with 25 photographs of different habitats. A short history of ornithology in Katanga, based mainly on Schouteden (1971), outlines various historical collecting expeditions and other observations dating back to the late 19th century.

The main body of the book deals in systematic order with those bird species occurring in the province. For each family a list of species reliably recorded in Katanga is given, with occasional notes on rejected species and vagrants or species with few records. Also mentioned are species that may occur, typically based on Dowsett *et al.*'s (2008) excellent work on the birds of neighbouring Zambia. Species accounts then provide information on distribution and status, ecology, breeding, movements and, where relevant, conservation concerns. Curiously, only those species illustrated by photographs, mostly taken by the second author, are given an individual account. This results in some families being relatively better treated than others. For example, both jacana species receive an individual account, each illustrated with two large photographs, totalling four pages. In contrast, of the 12 falcon species occurring in Katanga, only two are treated individually, each with a single photograph, the whole family Falconidae thus receiving just two pages. This is disappointing, especially as a large proportion of the scarcer and arguably more interesting species are not covered. It would have been interesting to learn more about Black-necked Eremomela *Eremomela atricollis*, Margaret's Batis *Batis margaritae* and Chestnut-mantled Sparrow Weaver *Plocepasser rufoscapulatus*, to name but a few, but these have been left without an account, whilst many common and widespread species get one. It seems that the choice to include individual species accounts has been dictated principally by the availability of photographs taken by the second author. Fortunately, these have all been taken in the field and depict free-living birds, unlike those in Lippens & Wille (1976), which are from trapped birds in unnatural poses. Species are illustrated by up to four photographs of generally good quality, although some are rather poor 'record shots'. The information given in the species accounts varies in extent and, although generally useful, is nowhere as detailed and precise as in Dowsett *et al.* (2008).

The absence of detailed accounts for *all* species is the main disappointment concerning this work. Distribution maps would also have been welcome. The Royal Museum for Central Africa, publisher of the book, possesses >14,000 bird specimens from Katanga (Schouteden 1971), which could have provided data for the production of these. However, despite its shortcomings, this is an important volume for anyone with a keen interest in the birds of Katanga. In their acknowledgements the authors state that the decision to produce a colourful, well-illustrated book (made possible via sponsorship) was deliberately made to attract a wider public. We hope they'll succeed in their aim and that the book will represent the first step towards a comprehensive atlas and handbook of this under-explored region.

Nigel Voaden & Ron Demey

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Obituaries

Alexander (Alec) David Forbes-Watson: 1935–2013

Born at Wylam in Northumberland, UK, on 26 February 1935, Alec came to Kenya as a child and spent much of his early years at the family home first at Kitale, and later at Ruiru near Thika. He was educated at the Prince of Wales School in Nairobi and, following a short period of military service with the Kenya Regiment, he spent four years at the University of Cape Town. His interest in birds started as a very young boy and was greatly influenced by such well-known ornithologists as Charles Belcher, Myles North, John Williams and Leslie Brown.

On his return from Cape Town in 1959, Alec joined the Kenya Game Department and for the next four years to 1963 was stationed at Kapenguria near Kitale, and at Kilgoris in the Trans-Mara District of south-west Kenya. In late 1966 he was fortunate to follow in John Williams' footsteps as head of the Ornithology Department at the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi where he and his trusted assistant Joseph Mwaki added several hundred important specimens to the Nairobi collection, which at the time was on a par with those in the Bulawayo and Durban museums as important repositories of Afrotropical bird specimens.

Alec's reputation as an extraordinary ornithologist was recognised by everyone who came in contact with him, particularly those of us who spent time with him in the field. From March 1964 to February 1966 he made a series of collections for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the most notable of which was his 1964 Socotra collection that included the discovery of *Apus berliozi*, described and named Forbes-Watson's Swift by Dillon Ripley in 1966. Later, while still working for the Smithsonian on the Kenya coast in January 1966, Alec collected two additional swifts flying over Gedi Forest near Malindi, described by Richard Brooke as a new subspecies (*A. b. bensoni*) of his Socotra birds. The following year (1967) he was engaged by the Mount Nimba Research Committee to make a collection of birds from the Nimba region of northern Liberia. During his two years there (May 1967–December 1968 and January–April 1971) Alec made one of the most important collections of birds from a hitherto little-known area of West Africa, including the discovery of Nimba Flycatcher *Melaenornis annamarulae*, which he described and named after his wife Anna in 1970.

Alec Forbes-Watson at the sixth Pan-African Ornithological Congress, Botswana, 1985 (John Ledger)

On his return from Nimba, Alec soon turned his attention to the birds of Madagascar and the Malagasy region, and for the next few years he and I made several visits to the Comores, Seychelles, Madagascar, Réunion and Mauritius, while in 1976 we were able to resuscitate the Pan African Ornithological Congresses (PAOC) with a very successful and well-attended fourth PAOC in the Seychelles. By the time of PAOC5 in Lilongwe, Malaŵi, in 1980 and PAOC6 in Francistown, Botswana, in 1985, Alec was one of only a handful of individuals fortunate to have attended all of these gatherings up to that time, such was his passion for Africa and its unparalleled birdlife. Later, in 1993, he co-authored with Bob Dowsett a *Checklist of the Birds of the Afrotropical and Malagasy Regions*.

During a visit to Tsavo West National Park in November 1969, Alec noticed that large numbers of Palearctic migrant birds were attracted to the floodlights of Ngulia Lodge, and so alerted Daphne & Graeme Backhurst, Hazel & Peter Britton and David Pearson, all experienced ringers, to witness for themselves the opportunity to ring hundreds of migrants on their southward passage. This phenomenon has now been studied in some detail, and since the mid 1970s huge numbers of migrants have been ringed annually by both local and overseas ringers, while the Ngulia Ringing Group, now in its 37th year of operation, has ringed well over 500,000 birds to date, all due in part to Alec's timely observations back in 1969.

With a long outstanding commitment to write up his field work at Mount Nimba, Alec resigned his position at the National Museums of Kenya and in 1978 sent his collection to the British Museum where Peter Colston and Kai Curry-Lindahl were able to start work on the entire Mt Nimba collection. After several delays the report itself (*The Birds of Mount Nimba, Liberia*) was finally published by the British Museum (Natural History) in 1986.

In 1979 Alec traveled to the USA where long-time friend and colleague Frank Gill arranged for him to work on the VIREO photographic project at the Academy of Natural Sciences Philadelphia. Alec remained in the USA for a few years before going to England in 1983, then back to the USA in 1985–86. He returned to East Africa in 1988 and from 1990–92 participated in bird surveys of several Uganda Forest Reserves under the auspices of the IUCN Tropical Forest Programme. However, his health was deteriorating badly and, following a minor stroke, he was forced to move into the Nanyuki Cottage Hospital in 2003 where, under excellent medical supervision and care, he remained until his death on 16 September 2013.

Alec's commitment to African birds and his enthusiasm for birding was palpable at all times. He was also a talented artist and some of his many line drawings adorned the book *Oh Quagga* published in 1983 by Ian Parker and Alan Root. He was constantly the life and soul of many parties and impromptu get-togethers, so much so that he will be fondly remembered by many friends and colleagues in the USA, the UK, as well as in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and several other African countries as a fount of knowledge on not only birds, but on all aspects of natural history. With no surviving next of kin, his two brothers having been killed under tragic circumstances several years earlier, Alec Forbes-Watson, an extraordinarily talented individual, will be long-remembered by many of us who were so fortunate to know him as a true friend and colleague.

Don Turner

This obituary was first published in *Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl.* 133: 254–255 and is reproduced here with kind permission of the author and the British Ornithologists' Club.

Bob Sharland: 1917–2013

Bob Sharland's death in England on 28 June 2013, at the impressive age of 95, ended a close association with Nigerian ornithology that had lasted 64 years. During this time he aided and encouraged many researchers, was active in the field himself, published his findings, and was a pillar of the Nigerian Ornithologists' Society (later the West African Ornithological Society, WAOS). His 90th birthday had been celebrated with a dedicated issue of the latter's journal *Malimbus* in 2008.

Robert Edgar Sharland was born on 17 December 1917 at Bournemouth, Hampshire, where his father was a dental surgeon. After war service in the Indian Army (he held the rank of Captain and was awarded the Burma Star), Bob completed his training as an accountant. Wishing to work overseas, in about 1949 he took employment with the United Africa Company's Nigerian Oil Mills, and was initially based in Lagos, then, soon after, Jos. He very quickly took an active interest in the Nigerian avifauna, and his first discovery of importance occurred in 1951, when he found a completely new population of Long-billed Pipits *Anthus similis* on the Jos Plateau; a specimen that he collected on 20 September 1951 became the type of the subspecies, *josensis*. The date of this discovery has repeatedly been cited as 1957 (e.g. *The Birds of Nigeria*, 1994), but this is wrong, and the specimen was registered in 1952 at the British Museum. Bob was not a systematic collector, but he knew when it was advisable to obtain a specimen. Also on the Jos Plateau, in August 1952 he shot the first Nigerian Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*, and on 8 October 1958 he discovered, and collected a specimen of, the very isolated population of Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* that has since been found to be resident there.

Most of Bob's observations were made with binoculars and (from the late 1950s) using mist-nets as a ringer. Other species that he found for the first time in Nigeria were Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum* (caught at Kano on 22 October 1971) and Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (obtained from a hunter at Nguru on 27 December 1977). The first of these was the result of his intensive ringing activity, the second of his pioneering monitoring of the exceptionally important northern Nigerian wetlands, for the International Wildfowl Research Bureau. It is impossible to know the number of birds ringed in Nigeria by Bob, but for many years he was the only ringer in the country. In 1959–60 he was at Calabar, where his ringing of Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* produced nine foreign recoveries; in Kano from 1960 into the early 70s, Bob was even more successful with his main target species, Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, producing no fewer than 45 recoveries abroad.

Bob Sharland did more than go about his own birding, he was convinced that collaboration was essential, especially in a country as large and little known as Nigeria. He was in close touch with other resident field ornithologists of the time, notably Leslie Brown, John Elgood, Hilary Fry, Stephen Marchant and William Serle. In 1964 he and John Elgood started the Nigerian Ornithologists' Society, whose *Bulletin* was to become an invaluable repository of knowledge of Nigerian birds. Visiting researchers were always warmly welcomed by Bob and accommodated (helped by his wife Jane). Moreover, they were willingly driven wherever necessary in the field, whether it be to the Nguru wetlands for waterfowl, or the local borrow pits for wagtail ringing. His car, if I remember rightly, was a Citroen DS (the still famous 'déesse'), and with its hydro-pneumatic self-levelling suspension and Bob driving, who needed four-wheel drive? I particularly appreciated the hospitality and help I received from the Sharlands when I arrived at Kano in 1968 to join the British Ornithologists' Union expedition at Lake Chad, where I spent the best part of a year, and where my vehicle and I were kept running thanks to Bob's numerous contacts. For more than 40 years Bob was treasurer and / or secretary of WAOS; he ceased to be resident in Nigeria in 1982, but continued in office until 2009(!), and he was also active in the Nigerian Field Society.

Bob Sharland at Kagoro, Nigeria, 1985: left to right, Roger Wilkinson, Gus Ezealor, Bob Sharland and Roger Beecroft (Roger Wilkinson)

Bob published more than 80 articles and notes, including (as co-author) the book *The Birds of Nigeria* (Elgood *et al.* 1994), a review of Palearctic migrants in Nigeria (*Ibis* 108: 84–116, 1966), the birds of Kano State (*Malimbus* 3: 7–30, 1981) and of Nindam Forest, Kagoro (*Malimbus* 8: 2–20, 1986). In the obituary that Bob wrote of that other pillar of Nigerian ornithology, John Elgood (*Bull. ABC* 7: 50, 2000), he ended with 'we have all lost a great friend'. We can say the same of that tall, lean, often rather diffident figure that was Bob Sharland. Further memories of Bob appear in *Malimbus* (2008, 2013). Bob leaves behind Jane, and their children Peter and Philippa. I am grateful for additional information (and the photograph) from Roger Wilkinson.

Robert J. Dowsett

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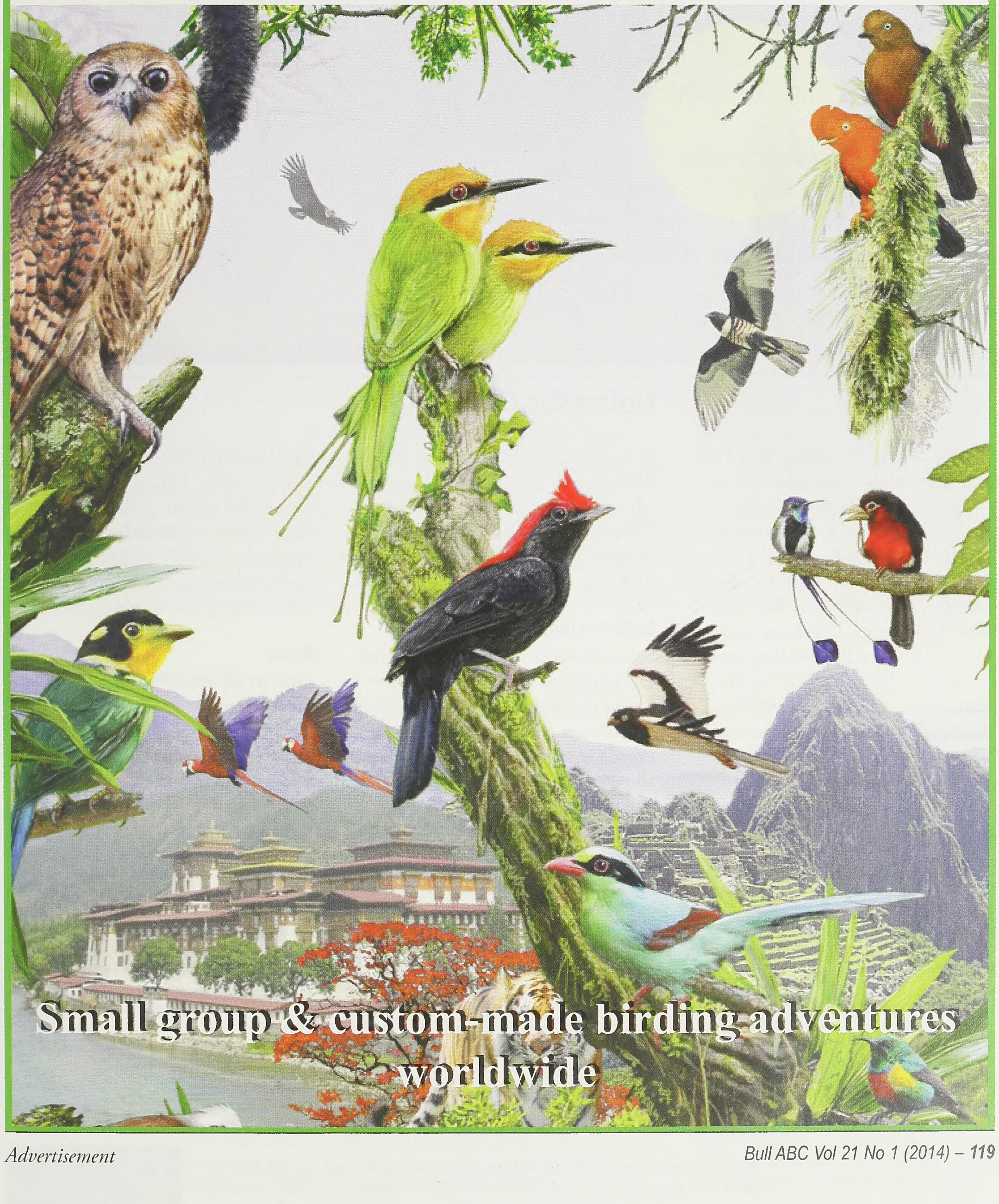

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Submissions

Submissions are accepted in English or French and should be sent by e-mail to editor@africanbirdclub.org. All submissions are acknowledged. French summaries are required for all papers published in English, and vice versa. Those submitting papers should supply a summary for translation into English, or French, as appropriate. Unless a sketch map is provided as part of the article, place names should follow those on standard or readily available maps (preferably a recent edition of *The Times Atlas of the World*).

Style

Authors are requested to follow conventions used in the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* and to refer to a recent issue for guidance. A detailed style guide can be obtained on request from the Editor.

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The Club aims to appoint many further ABC Representatives. If you are interested in supporting and promoting the Club in your region, have any queries, or require further information relating to the ABC Representatives scheme please do not hesitate to contact the Membership Secretary at the Club address, e-mail membership@africanbirdclub.org.

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The Supporting Members scheme is a key part of the Club's strategy of encouraging the spread of knowledge and understanding of birds as widely as possible throughout Africa. The scheme enables Africans who would not otherwise have the resources to join, to become members of the Club. The scheme is funded by Supporting Members who pay a minimum of UK£30 to cover their own membership and the subscription of at least one African member. The money they contribute over and above their own subscription is placed in a special fund that is used to cover the membership expenses of African members whom they may have nominated, or who have been nominated by other Club members.

Although we have suggested a minimum of UK£30 to become a Supporting Member, any contribution is welcome. All members of the Club, even if they do not feel able to become Supporting Members themselves, are invited to nominate candidates for supported memberships. Candidates should be nationals of an African country, with a genuine interest in wild birds but without the resources to become members in their own right. Africans who think they may qualify are very welcome to put their own names forward, supported by a letter of recommendation from someone such as their employer, teacher or an officeholder in a local wildlife organisation.

The scheme now also includes clubs who wish to be affiliated with the African Bird Club in African countries where it is difficult for local individuals to become members in their own right. Clubs accepted for membership under the scheme receive up to six copies of each issue of the bulletin for circulation among their members. Instead of paying a membership fee, Clubs are asked to provide a short annual report on their activities that may be published in the bulletin. Clubs interested in becoming Affiliated Member Clubs are invited to apply to the ABC Secretary giving details of their membership, their constitution or a statement of their objectives and conditions of their membership, and their activities to date.

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ABC offers a service to help members with information requests. Perhaps you are planning a trip to Africa and need local advice, or maybe you are in search of an obscure fact about an African species. The Club does not guarantee to find all the answers but will try to help. The service is free to ABC members. Contact: Keith Betton, who is also custodian of ABC's journal library, at 8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 0DR, UK. Tel: +44 1252 724068. E-mail: info@africanbirdclub.org.

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